

# Bandwagon

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# BANDWAGON

## The Journal of the Circus Historical Society

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### THIS MONTH'S COVER

Albert D. Hodgini performed in Europe for a number of years before coming to America in 1908. He appeared as the "Original Miss Daisy" in both Europe and in the United States until 1922.

The lithograph on the cover was printed by Alex Hoenig in Berlin, Germany around 1905. The poster is from the Pfening Archives.

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### CORRECTION

The Harley Sadler article in the March-April, 1993 issue contained an error regarding the sale of the Sadler dramatic show equipment.

The show was not purchased by Joe McKennon as stated. Joe McKennon advises that the Marion McKennon show was built from scratch in Paris, Texas in 1946.

In 1947 Sadler joined McKennon as a partner in the McKennon show and was featured in the performance. In 1948 McKennon leased the Sadler title but Sadler was not with the show.

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**D**uring the first half of this century, the Hodgini name was prominent among the most celebrated circus riders in America. Two previous articles relate to the artistry of Albert Hodgini as the remarkable "Miss Daisy" and to the accomplishments of Adele Hodgini Bedini and her family as equestrians.<sup>1</sup>

As previously reported, the family was English and had the name of Hodges. For professional reasons, particularly in the international arena, the name was changed to "Hodgini" and many of the successive members of the family, both in Europe and in America, used this name in the circus ring.

About 1835, just prior to the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria in England, Joseph Henry Hodges (1823-1900) left his trade in a brass factory in Birmingham, England and embraced a life of showmanship, eventually with Ginnett's Wagon Show. A brother, Ted, later joined him in this venture. Eventually their adventures took them to Italy and then back to England, where Ted continued his own career, while Joseph went on to Russia with Circus Salamonsky and later with the Anesta Ciniselli Show. After the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881, the Hodgini troupe went to Germany for about fourteen years to appear with the Gotthold Schumann Circus, later managed by Albert Schumann. Joseph retired at the age of 72 and turned his interests over to his son, Joe, Jr. The father returned to Cape Hill in Birmingham, England where he resided for three years. The climate there was not favorable for his health and he returned to Hamburg, Germany, where he spent his remaining years and where he was interred. His wife died there three years later.

With his wife, the former Diana Hold, Joseph Henry Hodgini had seven children of whom at least four became circus people: Amy (1865-?), a clever rider; Joseph Henry, Jr. (1867-1950), a performer and proprietor; Adele Bedini (1869-1946) and Albert (1881-circa 1963).

Joseph's brother, Ted (1835-1915), was first married to Anna Cortella, a rider and dancer. After some years with Circus Oskar Carree in Germany, Ted returned for eight years to circus life in London. Then going back to Germany as a widower, he was on a boat show for two years playing up and down the Rhine. From 1874 until 1877 he had his own show in Germany. During this time, while he was looking for a place to get his laundry done, he met 19 year old Heinka (Heike) Henrich (1858-1929). A romance grew out of this chance meeting and soon after they were married. All of their seven children,

# THE RIDING HODGINI FAMILY

By John Daniel Draper

five girls and two boys, went into show business.

Ted and Heinka's children became somewhat of an international family. Susie (1876-?) was a wire walker in Germany and Harriet (1882-?) married Emanuel Sirrene and was with a musical act on Harmstrang Circus in India. Victoria (1884-?), wife of Max Duda, remained in England and used the Hodgini name in show business. Hettie (1895-1969) came to America, was a bareback rider and married Reno McCree, Jr. in 1913. She was made a permanent cripple as the result of the big Hagenbeck-Wallace train wreck near Gary, Indiana in 1918. Son Edward (1881-1924) was a circus proprietor in the United Kingdom and on his death left seven children. Four of them, Corinne, Caroline, Joseph Harry and Edward, were "adopted" by Charles A. Rooney and all became very successful performers in America.

Joseph Henry Hodgini, Jr. in Moscow in 1889. Albert Hodgini, Jr. collection.



The remaining daughter was Hermine "Minnie" (1888-1958), the wife of Charles A. Rooney. The younger son is Joe H. Hodgini, now residing in Florida.

An account of the careers of Minnie and her nieces and nephews in the United States can be found in an article on the Rooney Family.<sup>2</sup>

The present narrative will feature briefly the career of Joseph Henry Hodgini, Jr., who never came to this country, and the careers of Albert Hodgini, Joseph H. Hodgini and Hettie Hodgini McCree and their respective families.

## Joseph Henry Hodgini, Jr.

Joseph Henry Hodgini, Jr. spent his entire life associated with his father in show business in which he was involved in every aspect from feature jockey rider and juggler on horseback to manager and owner. Although retaining his British nationality, he spent most of his life in Germany, was interned there during World War I and retired in 1923, making his residence at Frankfort-Am-Main.

## Albert Hodgini

Albert D. Hodgini was born and reared in the routines of a circus performer. It is reputed that in Germany he made his first appearance at the age of three when he was carried by his father on to the stage in a carpet bag and, as the act progressed, he would step out of the bag dressed exactly like his father. During his first twenty years, he acquired an academic education in England, attended a military and riding school in Germany and appeared with the Albert Schumann Circus in Berlin.

He also developed an expertise in a variety of performing acts: head and hand balancing, tight rope walking, animal training, high perch, juggling, flying trapeze and wire. Around the turn of the century, with the celebrated Julius Seeth, he also tried his hand with wild animal training. However, after seeing the antics in the arena of a crazed lion that had to be shot on the spot, he lost all interest right then and there in presenting wild animal acts.

At this juncture, Albert turned to developing a riding act. His outstanding equestrian success in Europe was as a female impersonator, riding and somersaulting on a bareback horse as he was clad in an evening gown with long skirt. This act produced later in America became his famous "Miss Daisy" production.

In 1904 Albert Hodgini performed on the Ciniselli Circus in Russia and then in Warsaw, Poland. He also appeared at the



leading vaudeville houses of Europe as well as the Berlin Winter Gardens. In these tours he played to the royalty of Spain, Germany, Italy and England.

It was in 1907 that Albert signed with Thompson and Dundy to bring twelve trained stallions and four other performing horses to the United States for a twenty-two week engagement at the New York Hippodrome. He also brought a taximeter mule and a brewery act using nine foot barrels on a flat wagon. Returning to Berlin at the end of the season, he came back again in 1908 for eight weeks of work on the Keith Time. He was then engaged by Ringling Bros. for the Chicago opening of the 1908 season at a salary of \$150 per week. He was to present a principal riding act and a juggling act on horseback. During the winter of 1908-1909 his cousin, Joe H. Hodgini, came to this country as Albert's ap-



Albert Hodgini as "Miss Daisy" on Ringling Bros. Circus in 1914. Pfening Archives.

prentice at the Baraboo quarters. Soon there would be two other apprentices, Adolf Gimperlain and Otto Griebing.

Dressed in a long tight skirt, leaping and pirouetting from the ground to the back of a running horse and then juggling bric a brac and lighted lamps as the horse galloped around the ring, Albert rode his remarkable "Miss Daisy" act until 1922. "She" was a sensation as "she" vaulted over the horse's back with an agility, ease and rapidity that seemed impossible for a woman to execute. Of the whole presentation the most graceful feature was the manipulation of a chair in the bareback riding demonstration. Billed as a graceful Italian rider and the greatest woman rider in the world, "Miss Daisy" regularly received letters from people in Rome and

souvenir post cards from all over Europe. This act was on Ringling Bros. for most of ten years and then appeared on Sells Floto Circus for an additional six years.

In 1913 Albert Hodgini introduced his Great Balkani Riding Act featuring the entry into the ring of Oriental costumed performers, actually his wife, cousin Joe, Otto Griebing and himself, on an elaborately decorated trampoline wagon. Then followed a wild and skillful display of bareback riding by all members of the troupe. The Hodgini troupe's contract for that year stipulated a salary of \$200 per week for four artists, one groom and three ring horses.

During 1915 and the winter of 1915-1916, Albert produced from Baraboo, Wisconsin his Hodgini's Great European Shows, which went out on rails. The show featured the European polola, a most dangerous exhibition on horses, an exciting game of the ancient Moors. Of course, there was also the finished bareback equestrienne, the original "Miss Daisy."

By 1917 on Sells-Floto, Albert had also developed his great Usarda Troupe of Indian Riders with Baraboo George. At that time many of the leading American riding families had Indian presentations, featuring camp fires, tepees, juggling of flaming clubs and throwing of knives while riding galloping horses adorned with sleigh bells, all accompanied by the circus band playing real Indian war dances.

In 1926 Albert Hodgini brought his Great Usarda and His Tribe to Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West where his Indian artistry and the war dances were augmented by authentic Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Sioux. The Indians preceded the Hodgins, performing their stamp dance and furnishing a picturesque setting for the equestrians, who wore grotesquely painted faces and befeathered war bon-



The Balkani riding troupe on Ringling Bros. in 1913. Albert, Joe Sr. and Otto Griebing were in the act. Circus World Museum collection.

nets. There were also many tribal incantations. Albert served as arena director, succeeding Capt. Newton Hardin, and continued as equestrian director on the show through the 1929 Chicago Stadium Circus with Miller Bros. 101 Ranch. Members of his "Indian" troupe included Lawrence "Cotton" Daley, Dorothy Emerson, Mack McCarthy, Mack Scott and Charlie Griffin as well as his wife Eleanor Hodgini and their daughter, Harriet.

After 1919 Albert Hodgini, as Chief Usarda, continued his Indian riding act variously through 1934 on Hagenbeck-Wallace, the St. Louis Police Circus and a number of Shrine shows.

Besides this variety of presentations, the Albert Hodgini Troupe as early as 1924 also featured comedy riding with Albert doing the clowning. As Eleanor and Roberto, Albert and his wife had been sensational comedy vaudeville entertain-

Ringling Bros. Circus 1913 lithograph featuring the Balkani act. Circus World Museum collection.





ers as early as 1918. Prior to coming to America in 1907, Albert Hodgini had been known as Jimmy James, England's Favorite Comedian. As such he had appeared in a number of theaters including the hippodromes at Loughborough, Stowe-on-Trent, Exeter, Peterborough and Hastings and the Dudley Empire Palace, Bacut New Court Theater and the Bornley Empire.

In 1920 Albert rode an excellent principal act opposite Poodles Hanneford, Fred Derrick and Charles Rooney on Sells-Floto. Later in the 1930's he did both comedy and straight riding with Albert, Jr. as well as riding in the family act. However, as far as can be ascertained, there is no reference to his having been a somersault rider.

and Hippodrome circuits. In 1908 on the Orpheum Time in San Francisco, under the direction of Gus Edwards, they included in their repertoire of the "Upside-down Bell Ringers" the melody of Edwards' now famous song, "School Days, School Days, Good Old Golden Rule Days."

By 1913 Lori was participating in her husband's Great Balkani riding act. She was one of the Eleanor Sisters doing aerial strong jaw on Sells-Floto in 1917. Two years later on the same show she had mastered the principal riding act, being one of three featured lady riders. With Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West from 1926 to 1928 and at the Chicago Stadium with the same show in 1929 she rode side saddle the Charleston dancing horse, Black Beauty, in Capt. Sharp's high school act. Her horse was decorated with bells and at night with electrical effects. She also participated in Albert's beautiful Indian Village Riding Act. She concluded her circus career about 1930.



Harriett Hodgini on the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in the early 1930s. Pfening Archives.

#### Harriet Hodgini

Harriet Hodgini was born in Baraboo while her parents were on Ringling Bros. An early photo of her taken on Sells-Floto at about age four, shows her being held by Jack Dempsey, the famous prize boxer. Dempsey is standing, dressed in his robe and with his boxing gloves on his hands. He was featured on the show at that time.

When eleven years old, Harriet joined her parents in the Indian riding number on Miller Bros. 101 Ranch. That year she was also the youngest rider in the high school horse act. Attending school in Chicago in the winter, during the summer at the age of twelve she practiced as a cowgirl on a rearing horse. She fast developed into a good trick rider and a member of the Indian act doing bare back riding, knife throwing, fire juggling and shooting.

She also became a star ballet performer, prima donna and toe dancer in the spec. By the age of fifteen she was expert at doing the loop-around on a galloping horse, blindfolded and bound in a gunny sack, and also the pass under the horse's neck. On Hagenbeck-Wallace, Bessie Castello and Harriet in 1930 presented, in beautiful wardrobe, a pleasing number entitled "The French Doll."



The Bertie Hodgini riding act on Russell Bros. in 1936. Pfening Archives.

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Newspaper ad for the Hodgini two car circus in 1915. Pfening Archives.

On occasion, and principally near the end of his performing career, Albert was a premier presenter of liberty horses opposite such a master as Jorgen Christensen. Albert Hodgini retired as a performer in 1936 after the Cole Bros. date at the Chicago Stadium.

Mrs. Albert Hodgini (nee Eleanor or Laura Manello) (1884-1981) married Albert Hodgini in 1910 in Baraboo, Wisconsin. By 1900 as a member of the Manello-Marnitz Troupe, she had appeared professionally in all the principal cities of Western Europe and South Africa. This troupe developed one of the most successful acrobatic and balancing acts in circus history. It came to America in 1906 and opened on Ringling Bros. in 1907 as the "Original Upside-down Bell Ringers." They were on Ringling Bros. for the following five summers and for the winter months they joined the Keith, Orpheum



### Albert Hodgini, Jr.

Albert J. Hodgini (Bertie) became initiated as a performer with his family on Sells-Floto at the tender age of six. Two years later he was demonstrating to a high degree for one so young the conception of being funny. In 1928 he was one of twelve high school horse riders and was performing in his father's Indian Village Riding Act on Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West. At the age of fifteen on Sells-Floto he was a full member—4th generation—in the Hodgini act under the tutelage of his father. In 1931 he rode, dressed in a long skirt as a girl in the family act with his mother, father and sister.

On Curtis-Gregg in 1934 he was riding bareback, both in comedy and straight,



The Four Flying Stars, left to right Albert Hodgini, Eddie Sauser, Claudine Hays and Pete LaFramboise, in 1938. Pfening Archives.

with the family act. Before the 1935 season with Cole Bros., both he and Harriet were on the vaudeville circuit through the midwest, billed as "The Texas Kids."

After the retirement of his father, Bertie formed his own bareback riding company. On the opening day of Russell Bros. Circus in 1936, Mrs. Albert Hodgini, Sr. as well as Harriet and her husband were there to see Bertie inaugurate his new riding act in display #14. In addition to Bertie it consisted of Claudine Hayes and Helen Kelps and featured a horse to horse back somersault by Bertie while the animals plunged around the center ring. Performing on two white horses, his company was billed as America's youngest and most sensational bareback riders. Later in display #23, the same company appeared in spectacular Indian riding and juggling of fire sticks. Bertie also rode a manege and high school act (one of sev-

en) with Frank Miller's famous dancing horses. In the Reb Russell after show wild west, Bertie and Claudine Hays did an Australian whip cracking act.

Bertie's riding act was on Downie Bros. Circus in 1937. The *Billboard* of April 24, 1937 stated that Bertie's act "is the answer to the circus manager's quest for a riding act that is different. It does not have the usual riding comedian but is a fast moving, thrilling exhibition, gorgeously costumed and there is comedy, too. The two feminine members—Cleone and Claudine Hodgini—are breath takingly lovely. In the finale, the troupe doubles in an Indian riding act that is one of the outstanding novelties."

Bertie was back on Russell Bros. in 1938 with his bareback riding trio displaying youthfulness, agility, skill and gorgeous wardrobe. There was also the Hodgini Indian riding and juggling act, a sure fire favorite that brought the circus program to an exciting finish.

In that year, in addition, he had his first and only flying act. The four flying stars were Bertie, Ed Suaser (catcher), Pierre La Framboise and Claudine Hayes. At Chicago on May 30th the Albert Hodgini, Jr. troupe left Russell Bros. to play fair and park dates for the Barnes-Carruthers booking agency. Bertie was replaced by the Joe Hodgini family, which had started that season on Downie Bros. Later in the season Bertie retired from his circus career and went to the Van Orman hotel chain as a trouble shooter. In 1940 he was assistant manager of the Terre Haute House Hotel and ten years later he was operating the "Race-track," a Terre Haute night club.

### Joe Hodgini, Sr.

When Joseph H. Hodgini arrived in Baraboo from England for the winter training session of 1908-1909, he was in his early teens. By 1910 he was doing standing riding while juggling tennis balls and rubber foot balls and catching apples on a rapier. This performance was listed as being done by the two Hodginis, actually they were Joe Hodgini and Adolph Gimperlain.



James McCammon and clown Joe Hodgini, Sr. on John Robinson Circus in 1921. Circus World Museum collection.

Four years later in 1914 the Four Hodginis, Joe, Albert and his wife and Otto Griebeling, had a contract with Ringling Bros. for a salary of \$180 per week, \$20 less than the previous year. The four of them were in the Oriental riding act. Also Albert's wife and Joe were doing double juggling on horseback. Joe and Otto also rode in the spectacle with Mrs. Albert Hodgini. Griebeling had just arrived in this country the preceding year. After 1914 Joe and his cousin, Albert, were on the same shows for only a few seasons: Sells-Floto in 1923, Chicago Stadium Circus with Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West in 1929, Cole Bros. in 1935 and Cole Bros. at the Chicago Stadium in 1936.

In 1915 Joe Hodgini and Etta Davis (1894-1965) were both on Ringling Bros., he as an equestrian and horse trainer, and she doing an iron jaw act, tight wire walk-

The Joe Hodgini riding act on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1937. Left to right Hodgini, Ethel Freeman, Dorothy Davenport, Rose Wallet, Mrs. Hodgini and Freddie Freeman. Pfening Archives.





ing and knife throwing. In November of that year they were married.

Etta Davis and her twin sister, Rita, had been apprenticed in 1909 to Mr. and Mrs. Ty-Bell to be taught aerial gymnastics.

The first year as the Ty-Bell Sisters they were with Howe's Great London, employed by Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers. During part of 1917 Joe and Etta were together on John Robinson's where she performed on the tight wire and he was in a riding act with his brother-in-law, Charles Rooney, and Charles' sister, Elizabeth. That season was the first of six that Joe Hodgini and his wife appeared on this show. In 1919 they were billed as the Original Hodgins. Both were riding principal acts. Also Joe and Etta with Clara Masters were riding in a family act and Etta was doing an iron jaw performance.

The next season marked the initiation of the famous Joe Hodgini comedy riding act with Joe as the great equestrian clown. Other members were Etta, Irene Montgomery, John Smith, Ben Burkhead and James McCammon. McCammon was with him through at least 1928.

In 1920 there were also two men's principal riders, Cecil Lowande and Joe Hodgini; and four lady principal riders, Irene Montgomery and Etta Hodgini as well as Nettie Dill and Elizabeth Rooney Romig.

Early in the season of 1921 the comedy act, in addition to Joe and Etta, was composed of Cecil Lowande and Nettie Dill while later in the same season it included James McCammon, John Smith, Nettie Dill and Doc Keen, the comedy cop. Joe was also one of three male performers doing a principal riding turn. "Johnny," one of the dapple gray Percherons in Hod-

gini's act at this time, had two years earlier drawn a milk wagon for a Toledo, Ohio dairy.

gini's act at this time, had two years earlier drawn a milk wagon for a Toledo, Ohio dairy.

After their tenure on the John Robinson Circus, the Joe Hodgini comedy riding troupe moved over to Sells-Floto for 1923. Etta did principal riding and as an extra activity, Joe headed the show's baseball team.

For the next four seasons through 1927 Joe and Etta were never on a large under-canvas circus. They played mostly Shrine shows as well as parks and fairs. In New York State, they performed at both the New York Hippodrome and the Luna Park Circus at Coney Island. They were also on the Pantages Circuit in both the midwest and the far west as well as on the English Society Circus in Mitchell, South Dakota, the Legion Circus in Bloomington, Indiana and the John B. Gordon Klan Fraternal Circus in Atlanta.

During this period they were also on two small circuses Rodgers and Harris in 1925 and Cook & Cole in 1927. Joe had a four person act on the latter show, put out by Leo Crook and Arthur Hoffman. This circus existed only from May 21st to June 1st.

By 1928 Joe's riding family was known throughout the world as a group of master bareback performers. It consisted of Joe, the riding comedian, and Etta, Joe, Jr., Mary Rickman, Joe Marvello and the old standby, James G. McCammon. Earlier, in 1925 Mamie Lowande had also been a part of this big feature attraction.

Joe's presentation copied the style of Poodles Hanneford (as did many others) with a similar routine including the falling trousers and the feigned chair throwing bit which would always scare the front row spectators.

However, it was not always fun and humor. A rider, such as Joe, had to expect injury and loss. In August of 1930, while doing a leap which should have cleared the horse as Howard Bryant rode astride, Joe's foot caught in the breast strap and he was thrown headlong on the hippodrome track. He was knocked unconscious but he was back again for the next show. And then, just three months later, his truck overturned at Lancaster, South Carolina and one of his reserve rosinbacks "May" was killed.

Other riders with Joe Hodgini in later years were: Tom McKinney, assistant equestrian director on Robbins Bros. and substitute for Joe Marvello when the latter broke his left leg (1928); Nick Gallucci, female impersonator and replacement for Victoria Bedini Coyle when she twisted her knee (1929); Ruth Correia (1929); Howard Bryant (1929-1931); Mary Rickman (1929, 1931); Reno McCree, Jr. (1934).



Joe Hodgini, Sr. and son Joey on Cole Bros. in 1944. Pfening Archives.

For the 1935 Canton and Detroit Shrine shows, besides his wife, Etta, Joe's act included Rose Walleth and Lulu and Dorothy Davenport as well as Orrin Davenport as the ringmaster.

In 1937 on Hagenbeck-Wallace the Davenport-Hodgini troupe was named for Orrin Davenport, the equestrian director on the show and also ringmaster of the act, and for Joe Hodgini. He was joined in riding by Etta, Joe, Jr., Tom Hodgini, Freddie and Ethel Freeman, Rose Walleth, Dorothy Davenport, Frank Flanagan, Paul Donovan and Marshall Toliver.

The 1944 Cole Bros. Circus featured Joe Hodgini's Riding Troupe made up, in addition to Joe, of Corinne Hodgini Dearo, Jimmy Rieffenach, Fred and Ethel Freeman and Tom Hodgini with Hanna Griebing as ringmistress.

Joe Hodgini's final riding troupe, which was on Bailey Bros. in 1948, included Joe, Tom and his wife, Betty, and Joe's wife, Hanna. Of course, Joe was the clown rider.

For a number of years the Hodgini act was known nation wide as one of the finest riding aggregations. It usually carried six to eight horses. In the earlier years Etta designed and made all the costumes. Each one was folded and wrapped in muslin. After the packages of costumes were labeled, they were stored in heavy duty trunks designed for rough handling.

In later years Etta would relate: "We wore silk tights we bought in New York for \$18 a pair. We naturally had to have several pairs because it used to be that





each act had to have tights and trunks to match. Circus performers today wear flesh colored tights or none at all."

As we have seen, Indian riding acts were a feature of many Hodgini performances. In the mid to late 1930's Joe and Etta Hodgini also had an Indian bareback riding act that included their sons, Tom and Joe, Jr., all dressed in native American costumes.

After retiring the riding act, Joe Hodgini and Hanna (1912-1984) embarked on building and presenting an "Aristocratic Canine Revue," made up of a Pomeranian, two Dalmatians, two Kerry Blues, two Western Highlanders and five Dachshunds. He had always wanted to prove that a pedigreed dog could be trained as well as a mongrel. The act, which also included a pony, featured dogs performing on a revolving table, balancing on a slack rope, jumping rope and leaping over the pony. The pony also did a hind leg walk. This canine presentation appeared from 1950 until about 1964 at various midwest state fairs and parks, on the James Strates Shows, Capell Bros. Circus, Terrell Jacobs Indoor Circus, TV Super Circus and Big Top Circus, Hamid-Morton, various Shrine shows and the Hippodrome International Circus. In 1957 Joe Hodgini's "Doggy Drolleries" were presented in an end ring on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. He continued on that show's Mexican tour the following winter.

From 1969 until 1972, Joe and Hanna were superintendents of the men's and ladies' wardrobes, respectively, on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. Joe had returned to the same organization, if in name only, which he had begun sixty years before. Finally retiring, Joe and Hanna took up residence in Nokomis, Florida.

#### Hettie Hodgini McCree

Hettie Hodgini was a sister of Joe H. Hodgini and Minnie Hodgini Rooney. In 1911 Hettie joined Mary Bedini Conners and George Conners in their riding act on Hagenbeck-Wallace. Mary Bedini (nee Gebhardt) had been a principal rider and protegee of Madame Bedini, Hettie's cousin, in the Victor Bedini Troupe on Hagenbeck-Wallace.

Both the McCree-Davenport troupe and Hettie Hodgini were equestrians on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1913 where Hettie married Reno McCree, Jr. on November 6th. His father headed the McCree-Davenport troupe which included his wife, Louise Davenport and Reno, Jr. This troupe had appeared on Ringling Bros. in

1910 and on Hagenbeck-Wallace from 1911 to 1913. The 1913 fall marriage was kept secret, not being revealed by Hettie until the next season when she was riding on Howe's Great London Shows with Mary Gebhardt as one of the Conners Sisters. In that year her husband was on Ringling Bros. Circus with the McCree-Davenport troupe.



Hettie Hodgini McCree on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1917. Pfening Archives.

Reno McCree, Sr. was fatally stricken in 1916 on Ringling Bros. at the age of 46 as he was performing with his wife, his son and Hettie at Dayton, Ohio. Struck down unconscious by apoplexy, he was carried immediately outside the big top where he died within minutes. The other members of the act continued their work, exhibiting marvelous bravery and self control, not knowing that McCree's condition was so serious. He had been removed so promptly from the ring that few in the audience even noted the interruption.

In 1917 Hettie and her husband were back on Hagenbeck-Wallace, she as a featured principal bareback equestrienne and he as a celebrated somersault rider. Returning to the same show the next season, Reno was doing a daring principal act and executing fascinating equestrian feats. Hettie rode a beautiful solo act opposite Rosa Rosalind who appeared in the arena. Hettie's sister, Minnie Hodgini Rooney, did her special riding act in the opposite end ring. Later, in Display #14, the Famous McCrees in Ring #1 presented a combination jockey act, second to none, while the Cottrell-Powells with their famous society carrying act were in the arena. The Three Rooneys (Charles Rooney troupe) offered a magnificent combination riding and jockey act in Ring #3.

Then on June 22nd at Ivanhoe, Indiana, a special troop train with the engineer asleep at the controls crashed into the rear of the second section of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus train. In the resulting destruction scores of persons were dead or missing.

Hettie and Reno were both seriously crippled. She suffered a broken back and he had a disabled foot. Just one year later on May 28, 1919 Hagenbeck-Wallace came to their home town of Toledo, Ohio. The local newspaper recorded the event: "Yesterday Hettie McCree, erstwhile featured bareback rider of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, sat in an invalid chair and watched the show under the 'big top' with eyes that would fill with tears in spite of the plucky little smile that curved her lips."

"For Hettie has spent all of her time in the invalid chair since she left a hospital following the wreck of the big circus train last June and chances are she will never walk again."

"Yesterday was a gala day for Hettie, the first time she had been among her 'own people' and they welcomed her with open arms."

"The matinee was given on Wednesday, not for the benefit of the big audience, but for the dark-eyed woman who applauded every act so enthusiastically and had a smile for everyone from manager to popcorn vender."

"But Hettie did not view the show alone, for no one loves a circus better than baby Rena, who is only two, but who goes into ecstasies every time she sees the horses and who directed the band most of the afternoon with two chubby outstretched hands."

"And what a welcome the show people gave Reno McCree, 'Mack' they call him, thumping him familiarly on the back."

"No one under the 'big top' was more popular than the McCrees."

"They didn't miss a moment of the day. Down town early to see the parade and then out to the 'lot' to talk with the 'bunch.'"

"And as though her welcome wasn't assured, Mrs. McCree took along six of the most appetizing home-made cakes, which mysteriously vanished long before the afternoon performance."

"The familiar tent which serves as dressing room for the women, with the band playing the overture outside, and every one hurrying with make-up and costumes, was almost too much and the tears wouldn't stay back."

"It's the only life I've ever had," Mrs. McCree said. "It's the only thing I know. I was born in a wagon, for my father and



mother had a wagon show in England for many years, you know. Neither Mack nor I can do anything else. We spent all our lives learning to ride and it is hard, not only on our feelings but on our pocketbook--this with a rueful little smile--'not to be able to go back.'

"Mrs. McCree's sister, Minnie Rooney, clever bareback rider herself, is still with the show. Neither she nor her husband were injured in the wreck last year."

Hettie was confined to a wheel chair until 1923. Although physicians said she would never walk, she had a will that did not let her give up and she finally made her partly paralyzed feet support her. Although Reno eventually did go back to riding, mainly in the role of a clown, he was severely handicapped and he could never duplicate his former achievements.

In 1922 he was on the John Robinson's Circus program with his brother-in-law, Joe Hodgini. He was doing a "Rural Riding Burlesque" number while Joe appeared as a premier comedy bareback.

Hettie was never able to go back to performing in the circus. Reno was on various shows, mostly in a clown role, for a number of years: Sells-Floto (1923, 1927, 1932), John Robinson's (1925, 1926, 1929, 1930), Sparks (1928), Cole Bros. (1937), and Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey (1941, 1942). Tragically, Hettie and Reno were divorced in 1927. Hettie married Raymond C. Keesbery in 1930. Reno married Isabel Cummings in 1928.

#### Joe E. Hodgini and Thomas Hodgini

Joseph E. Hodgini (Joe, Jr. or Joey) was born in 1923 and his brother, Tom, three years later. Joey was literally born to the circus, being christened as an infant in the ring at the Luna Park Circus at Coney Island, New York in 1924. He made his first appearance as a bareback rider at the age of twenty two months on the Rogers & Harris Circus at Racine, Wisconsin. He also did well as Harry La Pearl's featured clown. In 1925 at the end of the year he appeared in the role of the "new" 1926 chasing the "old" 1925 across the stage. On his fifth birthday he rode "Prince" in the center ring on Robbins Bros. Circus as O. A. Gilson's circus band played "The Victors." He also portrayed Little Jack Horner in the spectacle. That year in February he had made his first appearance with the Joe Hodgini comedy riding act on the Zurah Shrine Circus.

By 1930 both Joey and Tom performed in the family act on Downie Bros. Circus.

Four years later Joey, at the age of ten, was top mounter in his father's riding act. In 1940 Joey did a tight wire act at the Hamid Pier at Atlantic City, New Jersey. After a season on Polack Bros. in 1942, he joined the U. S. Navy.

After World War II, in 1947, Joey was briefly with the family act on Sparks Circus and also rode a principal act. He left the show in June at Toronto and the family departed a few weeks later. In 1949 he formed a trampoline act with his brother Tom and Tom's wife, Betty. They were billed as the Hodges-Hodgini Trio and appeared on Dales Bros. Circus. Joe also did a very professional tight wire act.

At the end of the season and for the following season, the Trio joined Siebrand



Joey, Joe, Sr. and Tommy Hodgini on the Bud Anderson Circus in 1941, Pfening Archives.

Bros. Circus and Carnival. The next winter (1949-50) was spent with the Gran Circo Americano in the West Indies. After another season on Siebrands in 1950, the brothers were on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in 1951 during the filming of the "The Greatest Show on Earth." In 1952 the trio was on Kelly-Morris Circus and also worked Hamid Morton dates at fairs. Back on Siebrand Bros. Circus and Carnival in 1953 and 1954, the Hodges-Hodgini Trio did wire, rola-bola, trapeze and trampoline while Betty also worked web and ladders. After the 1955 misadventure with Rogers Bros. Circus, the trio dissolved. Joey went to Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey and Tom, Betty and their children returned home to Peru, Indiana.

Joey joined the executive staff of the Big Show, serving first as secretary to Noyells Burkhart, legal adjustor, and later as executive secretary after 1969 on the Red Unit.

As we have already seen, Thomas Hodgini started his circus career at a very early age. By 1934 he was in the family act on

Gorman Bros. Circus. Ten years later, while Joey was in the service, Tom was top mounter in the family riding act on Cole Bros. Circus. On Bailey Bros. Circus in 1948 with his wife, Betty, whom he had married in 1946, Tom presented a trampoline turn featuring good bouncing and a fast moving act. A back layout and a series of somersaults made a flashy finish. Utilizing two rosinbacks, Tom also did an adequate conventional principal riding act, finishing with a back somersault. Later in the program, Betty and Tom joined Joe, Sr. and Hanna in the family riding act where Joe starred as the clown rider and won a heavy hand.

In 1949 the Hodges-Hodgini Trio was formed with Joey. The activities of this troupe have already been described.

As citizens of Peru, Indiana, after retiring as professional circus stars, Tom and Betty became active participants in the Peru Circus City Festival Show from its inception more than 30 years ago. Working with about 20 young people in 1960, they were the first trainers for the Peru circus. The event has now grown to a great show featuring some 250 student performers ranging in age from seven to twenty one. In 1962 Tom and Betty were given the prime responsibility of training the youngsters. The Hodgins

set up "back-yard circus quarters" at their home for practices three nights a week for a long period before the July show.

Joe Hodgini, Sr. produced a brand new festival show in 1965. The next year he was an active instructor, among other things teaching a young lady performer to "walk" a large globe down a flight of steps. Three years later, Tom Hodgini, Jr. took over Tom's balancing-juggling act, but his dad was still there as his trainer. As late as 1977 Tom and Betty Hodgini were still actively training the web-anchors aerial ballet and the trampoline turn.

And so, various members of the Hodgini family have contributed significantly as volunteers to the education of youth in athletic and circus skills and by so doing have kept alive the lure and artistry of the sawdust ring. No greater professional tribute can be given to a family of performers than to say that over the years, through inspiration and hard work, it has unselfishly fostered performance and entertainment skills to such a degree in the following generations.

#### Selected Lists of Engagements & Dates:

Table I-Albert Hodgini  
1907-New York Hippodrome



1908-1914-Ringling Bros. Circus  
 1910-Married Eleanor Manello  
 1915 & winter of 1915-16-Hodgini's Great European Shows  
 1917-1925-Sells-Floto Circus  
 1918, 1923-Vaudeville  
 1926-1928-Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West  
 1926-Harry La Pearl's Circus (Indoors)  
 1927-R. M. Harvey's London Hippodrome Circus (Indoors)  
 1929-1930-Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus  
 1929-Chicago Stadium Circus with Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West; Peoria, Ill. Grotto Circus  
 1930-Sells-Floto Circus (Chicago); Lewis & Zimmerman Circus (winter dates); Shrine dates  
 1930-Mrs. Albert Hodgini retired from the circus  
 1931-Sells-Floto Circus; St. Louis Police Circus  
 1932-Old Time Yankee Circus (Chicago Stadium); Los Angeles Shrine Circus; fairs  
 1933-E. K. Fernandez Circus (Hawaiian Islands)  
 1934-Curtis-Gregg Circus; St. Louis Police Circus; E. K. Fernandez Rodeo (Honolulu); Shrine dates  
 1935-Cole Bros. Circus  
 1936-Cole Bros. Circus (Chicago Stadium)  
 1936-Albert Hodgini retired

#### Table II-Harriet Hodgini

1921-1925-Sells-Floto Circus  
 1926-1928-Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West  
 1929-1930-Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus  
 1929-Chicago Stadium Circus with Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West; Peoria, Illinois Grotto Circus  
 1930-Tulsa Shrine Circus; Lewis & Zimmerman Circus; Sells-Floto Circus (Chicago)  
 1931-Sells-Floto  
 1932-Old Tyme Yankee Circus (Chicago Stadium); Los Angeles Shrine Circus; parks and fairs for Barnes-Carruthers and Sidney Belmont  
 1933-E. K. Fernandez, Hawaii; Oriental Village Chicago world fair  
 1934-Curtis-Gregg Circus; Grand Rapids Shrine Circus; Los Angeles Shrine Circus; St. Louis Police Circus; E. K. Fernandez, Hawaii  
 1935-Cole Bros. Circus; vaudeville; retired from the circus; married Harold F. Van Orman  
 1946-Divorced; had son Richard Albert Van Orman  
 1948-Married Dr. Maurice Mazel, founder of Edgewater Hospital in Chicago. Two daughters Diana and Desirre Manzel. Following Dr. Mazel's death in 1980 she became C.E.O. of Edgewater Hospital until retiring in 1986. Died May 29, 1989

#### Table III - Albert Hodgini, Jr. (Bertie)

1922-1925-Sells-Floto Circus  
 1926-1928-Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West  
 1929-1930-Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus  
 1931-Sells-Floto Circus  
 1932-Parks and fairs for Barnes-Carruthers and Sidney Belmont; indoor dates  
 1933-E. K. Fernandez, Hawaii; Oriental Village Chicago worlds fair  
 1934-Curtis-Gregg Circus; St. Louis Police Circus; E. K. Fernandez, Hawaii  
 1935-Cole Bros. Circus; vaudeville  
 1936-1938-Russell Bros. Circus  
 1937-Downie Bros. Circus  
 1938-Bertie retired from the circus  
 1939-1942-Supervisor of operations Van Orman Hotels  
 1943-1946-Staff Sgt. U. S. Army  
 1950-Married Marian Reese, two daughters, Alicia and Marina; production director Mesker Amphitheater, Evansville, Indiana  
 1951-Opened chain of ballet and gymnastic schools in Indiana and Kentucky  
 1984-Retired

#### Table IV - Joseph H. Hodgini

1908-09-Winter, came from England, apprenticed to Albert  
 1909-1915-Ringling Bros. Circus  
 1915-Married Etta Davis (Ty-Bell)  
 1916-Gollmar Bros. Circus  
 1917-Gollmar Bros. & Jas. Patterson Circus; John Robinson's Circus  
 1918-1922-John Robinson's Circus  
 1923-1924-Sells-Floto Circus  
 1923-Shrine dates  
 1924-Luna Park Circus, Coney Island; New York Hippodrome  
 1925-Rogers & Harris Circus; Shrine dates; N. Y. Hippodrome; St. Louis Police Circus; John B. Gordon Klan #91 Fraternal Circus; Legion Circus (Bloomington, Ind.); English Society Circus (Mitchell, South Dakota)  
 1926-Fair dates; Pantages Theater Indoor Circus; vaudeville  
 1927-Parks & fairs; Shrine dates; Cook & Cole Circus  
 1928-1929, 1931-Robbins Bros. Circus  
 1928-Shrine dates (some with Dennis Curtis)  
 1929-Chicago Stadium Circus with Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West  
 1930-Downie Bros. Circus; Sparks Circus  
 1931-Shrine dates; St. Louis Police Circus  
 1932-Shrine dates; Bostock Show; Walter L. Main Circus  
 1933-United Indoor Circus (fall & winter)  
 1934-Joe Lewis' Indoor Unit; St. Louis Police Circus; Gorman Bros. Circus; Campbell Bros. Circus (with Rex Cole & William Newton, Jr.)

1935-Cole Bros. Circus; Shrine dates  
 1936-Walter L. Main; Cole Bros. Circus (Chicago Stadium date)  
 1937-Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus; Walter L. Main Circus  
 1938-Shrine dates; Downie Bros. Circus; Russell Bros. Circus  
 1939-Shrine dates; Parker & Watts Circus  
 1940-Mills Bros. Circus (joined 5/27 for one week); Hamid Million Dollar Pier (Atlantic City)  
 1941-Terrell Jacob's Outdoor Show (Peru, Easter Sunday); Bud E. Anderson's Circus  
 1942-Polack Bros. Circus; Hamid-Morton Circus  
 1943-Miller's Indoor Circus (Charleston, West Virginia); Hamid-Morton Circus  
 1944-Cole Bros. Circus  
 1945-Parks & fairs (Gus Sun office); Gil Gray winter dates  
 1946-Parks & fairs; Shrine dates (Sun Bros.)  
 1947-Sparks Circus  
 1948-Bailey Bros.  
 1950-Aristocratic Canine Revue-fair route through midwest; park dates (Gus Sun); Capell Bros. Circus  
 1951-Parks & fairs; James Strates Shows; Terrell Jacob's Indoor Circus  
 1952-1953-Parks & fairs (Mike Barnes)  
 1954-T. V. Super Circus & Big Top Circus  
 1955-Hamid-Morton Circus  
 1956-T. V.; parks & fairs; indoor dates  
 1957-Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus  
 1958-1961, 1963-1964-Parks & fairs; indoor dates  
 1962-Shrine dates  
 1963-Hippodrome International Circus (Palisades Park, New Jersey)  
 1965-Peru Circus City Festival Show (producer)  
 1966-Instructor at Peru Circus Festival  
 1969-1972-Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus (wardrobe superintendent and designer)  
 1973-Retired

#### Table V-Hettie Hodgini McCree

1913-Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus  
 1914-Howe's Great London Circus  
 1916-Ringling Bros. Circus  
 1917-1918-Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus

#### Footnotes

1. "The Original Miss Daisy" by Barry L. DuBuque, *Bandwagon*, November-December 1979, pages 26-28. "The Equestrian Bedini Family" by John Daniel Draper *Bandwagon*, September-October 1991, pages 28-33.
2. "Those Other Cousins From Baraboo" (The Rooney Families) by John Daniel Draper, *Bandwagon*, July-August 1992, pages 4-13



**A** most unusual title appeared on a medium sized truck circus in 1963 when the United Nations Circus opened in Sarasota, Florida on April 9. The background of this show began two years earlier when Milton "Doc" Bartok joined with Leonard "Hoxie" Tucker to tour Hoxie Bros. Circus. Bill Elbirn remembered: "I first met Bartok and Tucker in 1961 when they toured a little six truck operry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Neither had been in in this area before. It was a perfect marriage for them and it is too bad it not turn out. Doc was a great agent."

"Before the 1961 tour ended Doc and Hoxie decided to join forces again for 1962. Hoxie had five or six trucks and Doc brought the remains of his med show equipment that had been stored in Houston, Texas. A quarters was set up in Oneco, Florida. During the winter Bartok bought some animals that would later wind up on his 1963 show. A hippo and its semi cage came from Luke Anderson. A six horse liberty act came from Jack Moore. He bought two elephants from Bill Perry who was disposing of excess Ringling-Barnum holdings from Venice. The bulls, Minyak and Sabu, were bad actors."

"Five trucks were provided by each owner. Tucker's L.B.T. Corporation and Bartok's Bardex Corporation were the owners operating as a partnership. The show was called Hoxie-Bardex Combined 3 Ring Circus."

Bartok was in charge of the routing with Joe Haworth as contracting agent. Bill Elbirn contracted dates in the New Jersey area.

Elbirn commented: "The 1962 tour was a financial success but there was a clash of personalities. Tucker told me around Labor Day that he would be in touch with me as soon as they closed for the season, which he did. The grand finale came at Lake City, Florida on October 27. Bartok took his equipment to Sarasota and Tucker wound up wintering in a junkyard in Valdosta, Georgia. Shortly after closing both owners contacted me about working for them in 1963. I chose to go with Tucker and I booked about four weeks for him and did not set any dates for United Nations."

Bartok wrote Elbirn on November 4, 1962 saying: "On October 27, our final stand, we de-

## SHORT SKETCHES OF FORMER SHOWS

# UNITED NATIONS CIRCUS

Season of 1963

BY FRED D. PFENING, JR.



Milton "Doc" Bartok co-owner of the United Nations Circus. Cliff Glotzbach photo.

cided to dissolve our partnership with the Tuckers. So it will be 'Bardex Corporation'

Sleeper semi No. 85 in winter quarters after just being decorated. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.



presents All Nations on Parade in 1963. We are going to concentrate on having a diversification of acts from various nations and stress the fact in our advance publicity. Will even have an act from Ghana or Ethiopia and have paper for them for the Negro areas and patronage.

"We divided the equipment that had been brought to the show. At this time some of the equipment is at Larry Davis' place and the hippo and bulls are at C. R. Montgomery's farm. After November 20 we move onto our fifty acre winter quarters which we have purchased on the outskirts of Sarasota, off Tallavast Road

near the airport. Have about ten in quarters now and will building and working in earnest very shortly. We will need seats, a light plant and a ticket wagon."

Bartok again wrote Elbirn on November 12, 1962 on a new United Nations letterhead saying: The above letterhead is self explanatory. Harry Anderson's Enquirer Printing is in the process of making the letterhead a multi-color deal which will add to its appearance. We will also have a quantity of special paper.

"Our elephant herd will be four bulls. Lois and Sheba are joining our herd. We will use an 80 with three 40s to start and are placing an order for a 90 to be delivered by the time we cross the Mason Dixon Line.

"With the strength of the new title I am of the opinion that we can go back into many of the New Jersey towns using phones. I have a new gimmick on the phones. We will give them 20% of the ticket wagon sales, providing the advance reaches \$2,000, and we offer to lend the committees a ticket sales director to make block sales, not singles or adult tickets. I set several towns this past fall with the gimmick and it worked fine.

"We are going to have some Cristiani acts and it will be one of the major circuses in the country."

It is doubtful that Bartok knew that the UN title was not new. A United Nations Victory Circus had played twenty years earlier from April 10 to 18, 1943 in Portland, Oregon.

On November 30 Bartok wrote Elbirn that: "Remo Cristiani is taking a 50% partnership in the organization and is moving his equipment to our quar-



ters and we are starting to paint new names on the trucks. We will try to cut it to twelve trucks if we can, though it will be equal to about an eighteen truck show. About nine of the trucks will be large semis.

"We are going to concentrate more on phone towns this year, but are going to be very picky about our promotional agents, and no high pressure and heat will be tolerated. Joe Haworth is here waiting will start work right after new years. He will have charge of the promoters and we have six crews ready to go to work as soon as we are ready."

Remo and Adolpho (Tripoli) Cristiani and Benito (Benny) Farnasari came to America to appear at the International Casino in New York City. In 1939 their tumbling and leaping act, using name the Pilades, was on Ringling-Barnum. Brothers Remo and Tripoli were cousins of the riding Cristianis, and have often been known to as "the Cristiani cousins." Benny Farnasari was also a cousin. They were tumblers featuring leaps over elephants. In 1939 Remo married Cosetta Cristiani and Tripoli later married Chita Cristiani. In the early 1940s they left the rest of the family to present their tetterboard act at military camps and night clubs. In 1945 they were with the M. L. Clark Circus. In 1959 and 1960 the cousins leased the King Bros. title and toured a circus. They joined with Pete Cristiani on the 1961 Wallace Bros. show, and in 1962 on Cristiani-Wallace Bros.

Remo Cristiani brought five trucks to the United Nations show. The office-ticket semi trailer had originally been on Cristiani's King Bros. show in 1959 and 1960, and on Pete Cristiani's Wallace Bros. in 1961. Two semis carrying seats, props and poles had been on the King show. A light plant semi had been on King, Wallace in 1961 and Cristiani-Wallace in 1962. A sleeper semi had been on Cristiani-

Semi No. 95 housed the United Nations light plant. Pfening Archives.



United Nation big top canvas semi. Pfening Archives.

Wallace in 1962. Cristiani also brought two elephants, Lois and Sabu, that had been on the Cristiani-Wallace show. These elephants had originally come from the Ringling-Barnum show.

Bartok wrote Elbirn again on January 16, 1963 saying: "We are busy here painting and training the bulls, five of them in quarters, getting them to work together. They are painting the trucks that Remo brought over.

"Bob Dickman, the lithographer that was with Hunt for a number of years, was here today and signed a contract to post for us and will supply him with two assistants and have a nice truck up there for him. This fellow Remo is one of the swell-est people you would ever want to meet. The family of them seem to do all in their power to please and it is one of the smoothest run partnerships you will ever want to see. They have wanted to go out on their own for several years, and after a couple of years around Pete's [Cristiani] show they are most grateful to be with us, and they don't interfere one iota in our department, and they don't make a single move without first consulting us. I think it will be a good combination. The Karolys will be with us, as will be nine Cristiani family turns, the Fornisaris, European clowns, a couple of Canistrellis, the Orestes and several others. We are going to have an all girl concert, Aimee Oakley and her cowgirls, six girls in the lineup."

Milton Bartok was a sensitive individual. He was offended by a rumor that Paul Van Pool had been writing to

his many circus pen-pals about Bartok. He wrote to Van Pool on February 2, 1963 saying: "It has been brought to my attention via various and sundry means, that you have been informing and claiming that I am a very difficult person to work for, and that I do not pay my bills, or that we had defaulted on payment of salary to

someone or something to that effect, and could not get or keep help.

"Paul, I wish you could visit our new fifty acre quarters and see the activity and the number of people working there. It would soon change your opinion of my being hard to work for, and not being able to get help.

"We have our performance all set for the coming season and have letters from many others wishing to work for us. I have four of the best agents in the country up front, who are paid promptly, and I don't think they think I am too difficult to work for. We owe no one, and pay our bills promptly, salaries included.

"I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, or been in contact with you in a business way or otherwise, so it must be that you received your information second hand. In that case I would double check and make certain it were true before crucifying a person. (Also review my obligations way back in my 'LODGE.') if you know what I mean.

"As far as I am concerned, it makes no difference to me just what you think, but though it would be the right thing to do to set the record straight! We are not much in the letter writing department, but on hearing the old wives tale thought it merited a letter.

P. S. The dissolving of the Hoxie and Bardex partnership was because of MY INITIATIVE (sic) and for reasons I do not care to mention."

The February 16 *Amusement Business* published a report on the show: "United Nations Circus opens in Sarasota, Florida

Straight truck No. 89 carried a stake driver and water tank. Pfening Archives.





on April 9 for a two day stand. Originally set for a one day showing, a big advance sale reportedly made the second day a must.

"Show will have a new 110 foot big top with three 40 foot middles, ordered from U. S. Tent & Awning. Trucks are getting a purple and white paint job with Jim Hand doing the art work and lettering.

"Personnel includes a flock of Cristianis--Remo, Tripoli, Benny, Belmonte and Italo, with the Ormente Cristianis coming from Italy, the Karolys, the Col. Calvin Miller family, the Fornisaries, Marie Jensen, Tommy Armstrong and Jua-nita.

"Four elephants will be carried, with a punk on order for summer delivery. These, the chocolate liberty horses, a pony drill and a giant hippo are all show owned."

Bartok assumed the role of general agent. A couple of other Cristianis joined their cousins on the show. Belmonte signed on as manager and Daviso joined as a performer. Other management people included David Bartok, legal adjuster; Bette Bartok treasurer; Tina Bartok, tickets; Sam B. Warren, contracting agent; Bob Dickman; advance advertising car manager; Joe Smega, concession manager; Remo and Tripoli Cristianis, superintendents.

Contracts were placed with the Enquirer and Acme printing firms. Acme Show Print of Hugo, Oklahoma designed and printed a number of attractive one and half sheet posters. Acme also printed a coloring book with a full color cover. A four page program insert listed the acts.

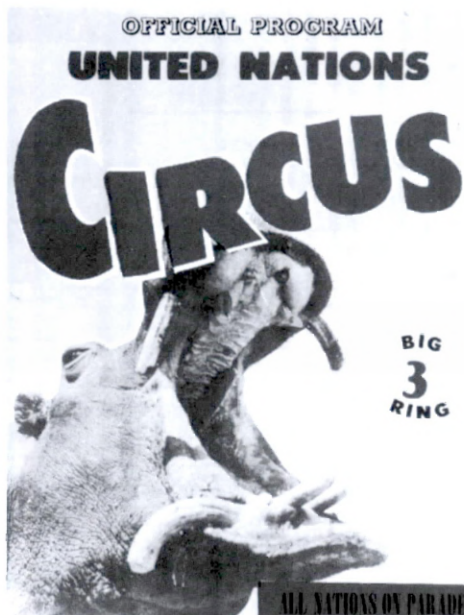
When the show moved out of quarters to open in Sarasota on April 9 it moved on seventeen trucks.

1. No. 1 Semi. Office, ticket, painted white with purple lettering. (Owned by Remo Cristianis.)

2. No. 45 Semi. seats, props, poles. (Owned by Remo Cristianis.)

3. No. 52 Semi. chairs, and big top canvas.

The four United Nations elephants and their semi No. 79 in background. Pfening Archives.



The twenty page United Nations coloring book contained a four page insert listing the program. Pfening Archives.

4. No. 57 Semi seats, props, poles. (Owned by Remo Cristianis)

5. No. 71 Semi. Hippo pit show. (On Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.)

6. No. 79 Semi. Elephants, side show props, banners painted on one side. (On Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.)

7. No. 85 Semi. Sleeper, props. (Owned by Remo Cristianis.)

8. No. 87 Semi. Horses and ponies, side show equipment, banners painted on one side. (On Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.)

9. No. 89 Stake and chain, stake driver, water truck.

10. No. 95 Semi. Light plant. (Owned by Remo Cristianis.)

11.--Volkswagon station wagon sound truck. (Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.)

12.--Shop truck.

13.--Cookhouse trailer. (On Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.)

14.--Grease joint, painted white, not lettered.

15.--Concessions, painted white, not lettered.

16.--Sleeper, painted white, unlettered.

17.--Semi. Diviso Cristiani horses and props, painted silver, not lettered.

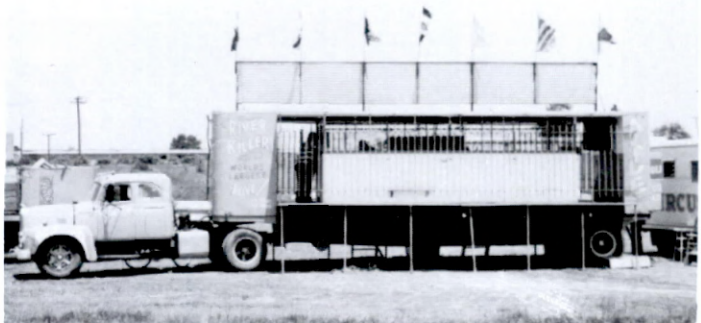
The show quickly moved north entering Georgia on April 15 at Trifton. Joe Bradbury visited the show in Manchester, Georgia on April 20 and provided a report in the September-October 1963 *White Tops*. Part of his account follows: "The United Nations Circus, a new show and a new title for 1963, was framed during the past winter at Sarasota by the owners, Dr. Milton Bartok, and Benny and Remo Cristianis.

"The big top is a new 92 ft. round with three 40's made of white canvas by U. S. Tent of Sarasota. It is a bale type and is trimmed in red and blue and has orange and blue striped sidewall. A new orange and blue marquee fronts it. All poles are aluminum.

"Interior of the big top presents a beautiful picture with wooden ring curbs painted purple and white for the center and red and white for the two end rings. Purple and silver back door curtains are used. Seating consists of blues using blue planks at both ends nine high and grandstand chairs on long and short sides. Chairs are painted red and are single, not in blocks, seven high on short side and five high on long side with room for two additional rows on the ground. Lighting arrangement has an eight bulb cluster hung high over center ring and two single bulb fixtures over the end rings. Four bulb light bars are spotted around the rings. The bandstand is located at the back door.

"The combination side show-menagerie top is a 40 with three 15's square end dramatic show type made of white canvas by U. S. Tent. It is a push pole and appears to be practically new. Older side wall, orange and blue striped, is used. The sidewall extends out for about 15 ft. on the far side to enclose the elephants. Semis No. 79 and 87 are spotted in front of the top on the midway side. Three panels of banners are painted on the sides of these vehicles to form the sideshow bannerline. A

The backside of the midway hippo show operated by David Bartok. Pfening Archives.





# UNITED NATIONS CIRCUS



**All Nations on Parade Featuring  
AMERICAN & EUROPEAN  
T.V. Circus Stars In PERSON!**

The Renowned <b>CRISTIANI</b> Acrobatic Troupe	Queen of the Air <b>DELILAH</b> in high aerial thrills
--	--

**SCORES OF TRAINED HORSES AND  
PONIES • CLOWNS GALORE • BIG  
GROUPS of Trained Wild ANIMALS**

Herd of Performing <b>ELEPHANTS</b>	Presenting MIN-YAN Elephant seen in Movie "Greatest Show on Earth"
--	--

**WORLD'S  
LARGEST HIPPOPOTAMUS**

**Children 75c Adults \$1.25 Grand-  
stand Reserved Chairs 50c Extra**

**COME EARLY - SEE IT ALL  
ONE DAY ONLY - RAIN OR SHINE**

The United Nations newspaper ads were designed by Forrest Freeland. Pfening Archives.

canvas banner reading 'Side Show and Wild Animal Zoo' is hung over the bally platform connecting the two trucks. Small flags fly from the top of the semis to complete a colorful arrangement. Carl Tyler manages the side show which has attractions of fire eater, snakes, torture box, and other traditional features. No caged animals are present. Tickets go for 35 cents. The side show art work was painted by Tom Cooper of Sarasota.

"Only other canvas on the show is a 25 x 15 Coca Cola green top used for the dining tent. A trailer is used for the kitchen equipment.

"David Bartok has his hippo pit show mounted on a handsome large semi which is highly decorated with painted panels and small flags, at the head of the midway. The hippo 'Goliath' is a big one and tickets are 25 cents. Red and white striped canvas bunting is used around the base of the vehicle. Other midway attractions are a pony ride and five concession stands and a large grease joint, all us-



The United Nations Circus 90 foot big top with three 40s. Pfening Archives.

ing blue and white or red striped canvas tops.

"Four elephants handled by Tommy Armstrong are carried. The herd consists of Sabu, Minyak, Lois, and Sheba, all Indian females. Sheba is still a punk but the others are big ones. Sabu, Minyak, and Lois were all once part of the Ringling-Barnum herd. Sabu and Minyak were on the Hoxie-Bardex show in 1962 while Lois and Sheba were on the Cristiani-Wallace Circus.

"Other lead stock consists of twelve horses and nine ponies. Three performing chimps are kept in the backyard.

"The truck color scheme is purple for both truck cabs and bodies with the shows title painted in yellow, white, or blue, and trimmed in blue or green. Some of the titling is done in script and all vehicles look amazingly colorful despite the unusual color scheme. Both tractors and semi trailers are numbered and are not the same in all cases. Number given on the truck list will be the number appearing on the trailer. A variety of trucks are present, some Fords, GMCs, and Internationals, most of them late models. All motorized equipment is in fine shape and the show moves in good time. Most of the trucks have seen prior service either with Hoxie-Bardex on the shows Benny and Remo Cristiani have been connected with in recent years. The backyard has about a dozen privately owned house trailers and trucks.

"Charles Schlarbaum leads the four piece band which has two trumpets, baritone, and drums. Band plays many traditional circus tunes, plus music from the classics and old standards that have been used by show bands for decades. A great many Latin American and European tunes

cue the performance to add to the United Nations flavor.

"The show sold a children's color book with a printed insert listing the 1963 official program. Col. Calvin Miller dressed in traditional ringmasters garb announces the big show. The program as presented at the matinee in Manchester was as follows:

"1. Spec, Grand Opening—United Nations. Four flag girls enter the center ring on foot followed by a mounted girl on beautiful horse carrying the United States colors. Appropriate announcements are given outlining the theme of this year's show.

"2. Clowns (5) dentist gag.

"3. Ring 1 Miss Jeannie, wire walking; Ring 2, risley act with Miss Antonette; Ring 3, wire walking with Senorita Anita.

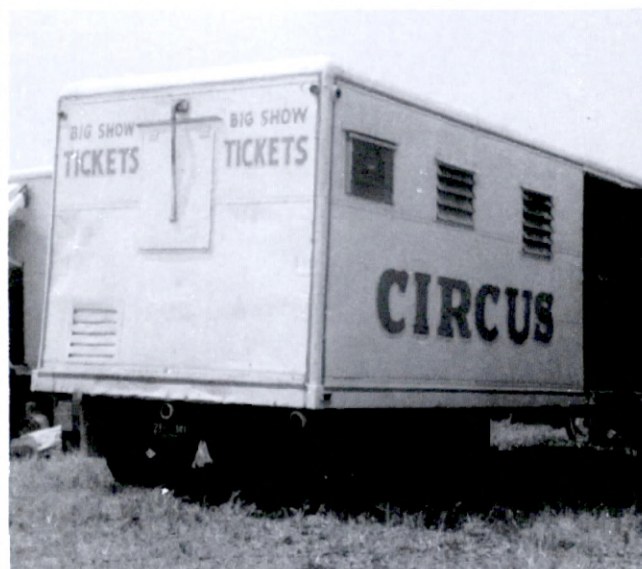
"4. Liberty horses (4) chocolate brown, worked by Col. Calvin Miller in the center ring.

"5. Single elephant act with Sheeba in center ring worked by Tommy Armstrong.

"6. Clowns. Marksmanship gag.

"7. Aerial ballet with two web girls over the end rings and Delilah Cristiani featured on single trapeze over the center

United Nations office-ticket wagon semi No. 1. John Van Matre photo.







Semi No. 87 carried horses, ponies and side show top. It was used as half of side show banner line. Pfening Archives.

ring. This is a beautiful act with Delilah performing several of the routines Betty Hutton did in the *Greatest Show on Earth*. Band plays old standards like *Stardust* and *Marie Elena*.

"8. Advertising pitch for Ford Galaxy with car entering center ring and unloading twenty kids.

"9. Trampoline act in center ring with the Olivios featuring Benny Cristiani.

"10. First concert announcement.

"11. Canestrelli's three trained chimpanzees in center ring. This act brings down the house as the chimps go through the soldier routine.

"12. Dressage act with Toni Cristiani riding Golden Flash in the center ring followed by Daviso Cristiani riding Casmar in center ring and around the track.

"13. Second concert announcement.

"14. Clowns, fight gag.

"15. Elephants (4) worked in center ring by Tommy Armstrong.

"16. Leaps featuring the Tripolis with Benny, Remo, and Tripoli Cristiani. Benny climaxes act with leap over 3 bulls.

"The Cossetta Cristiani riding act listed in the official program did not work at this performance.

"The after show has Curly Miller and Elly Mae, hillbilly stars; Tom Prince, the mental marvel horse; and Annie Oakley, sharpshooter. Tickets were 25 cents.

"The show has five clowns including Baghdoni, veteran dwarf clown long as-

Elephant semi No. 79, was other half of side show banner line. Pfening Archives.



sociated on Cristiani circuses. Costuming is good and the props are newly painted, and all in all the show presents a most pleasing appearance. All stock appears to be in the best of condition.

"The show plays exclusively under auspices with the Kiwanis club as sponsor at

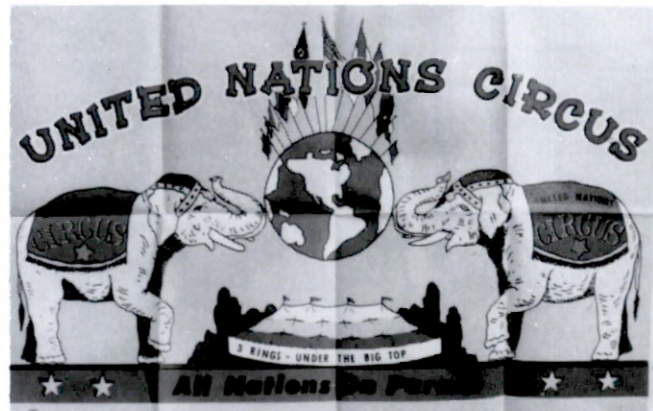
Manchester which put them on the fairgrounds lot. A good amount of paper is posted advertising the circus appearance. Many new designs have been created especially for the show. One particularly colorful litho has elephants holding aloft a flag studded globe. Red and white half and one sheet date paper is used and cards carry the same color scheme. Although no large daubs were observed by this reviewer the downtown area was liberally sprinkled with half and one sheet lithos and date paper."

United Nations moved north through Georgia, ten stands; Alabama, two stands; North Carolina, one stand; and Tennessee, five stands. The show went into Virginia at Norton on May 5 and played fifteen dates in that state. It was in Lexington Park, Maryland on May 22. During the month of May Paul Cristiani joined as promotional manager.

The June 15 *Amusement Business* reported the show had a strong opening in Sarasota, but business suffered some while playing dates enroute to the North. After playing the Georgia area business had improved. Circus personnel at the time included: Doc and Betty Bartok, advance; Dave Bartok, legal adjuster; Remo Cristiani and Belmonte Cristiani, general chores; Tina Bartok and Chata Cristiani, front door; Cossetta Cristiani, reserved box seats; Hank Henry, canvas boss; Tommy Armstrong, Bartok and Cristiani elephant boss; Calvin Miller, equestrian director, assisted by Mrs. Gayle Miller and Linda Miller; Carl Tyler, side show; Hyti, torture act; Tina Bartok, hippo pit show; Benny Cristiani, Italo, Bergungi, Mike, and Papa Fornasri, clown band and alley; Charles Schlarbaum, musical conductor; Daviso Cristiani, dancing

horses; Toni Cristiani, wire and aerial ballet; Jean Kuhn, high wire; Delilah, high trapeze; Joe Smega, concession manager; Cossetta, ballet on horseback; Cristiani Tumblers, acrobats; Sammy Wardino, lithographer; and Doc Hall and Sam Warren, publicity.

John Van Matre visited the show in Royersford, Pennsylvania on June 1. He reported: "The performance had been slightly rearranged with the addition of an aerial ballet in the next to closing number. The show ran one hour and five minutes. Other acts on the show but not working for various reasons were high school jumping horse, the Cristiani tetterboard act, the Benji juggling act and the Cossetta Cristiani riding act. He was impressed with the five man band lead by Chuck Schlarbaum, and mentioned that Schlarbaum was selling programs, route cards and a set of of special lithos used by the show. Van Matre added that the show was not putting up blues in one end, but that the matinee in Royersford was full.

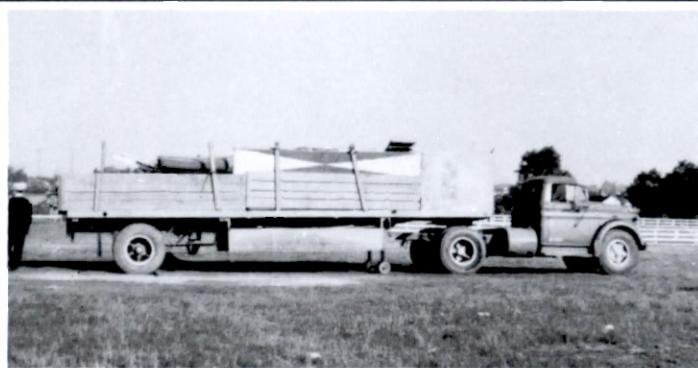


Special poster designed and printed by Acme Show Print of Hugo, Oklahoma. This design was also used on the show's letterhead. Pfening Archives.

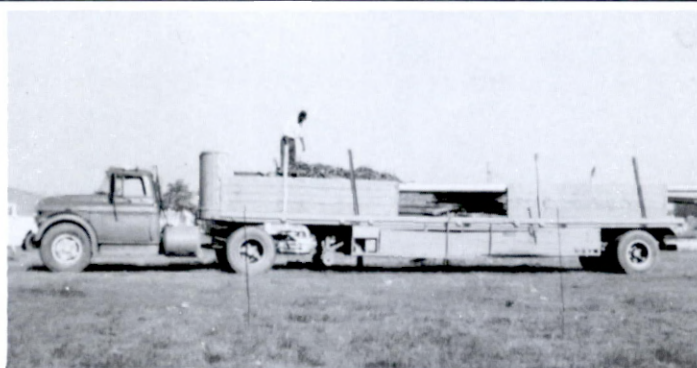
Twelve stands were played in Pennsylvania before the show entered New Jersey at Keasbey on June 11. Hoxie Bros., Cristiani-Wallace, and Hunt Bros. were playing New Jersey at the same time. Sixteen stands were played in the New Jersey before starting a string of stands on Long Island with a two day date at Center Moriches on July 1. Three day stands were played at Glen Cove, Hicksville and Deer Park. Two dayers were played at Oceanside, Levittown, Patchogue, South Farmingdale and Plainview. Valley Station was a four day date.

*Amusement Business* carried a report on the show in the July 27 issue: "The brand-new United Nations Circus, a first-time effort for Dr. Milton Bartok, appeared headed for success when caught up with in Long Island. The veteran medicine





Semi No. 45 carried seats, props and poles. Pfening Archives.



Semi No. 57 carried seats, props and poles. Pfening Archives.

show operator is ahead of the unit as agent. Initial business in the South had been disappointing, but Northern dates more than made up for it.

"Canvas is new this year, an oddball 93 foot top originally stitched for a revivalist by Sarasota Tent & Awning. With three 40-foot middle sections in place it seats upward of 2,000 people—most of them in comfortable folding chairs, and most of them usually occupied by patrons getting their money's worth.

"Not a wooden pole is in evidence. All are aluminum, as are the solidly framed posts and rails which encircle the arena. The effect is one of neatness and competence. Business after 12 weeks indicated the show will come home a winner.

"As for the performance, it is larded with Cristianis. Morale is excellent on the show on all levels. Bad luck accompanied the first Long Island stands, in an area which has been trampled by carnivals and two preceding circuses. Performances went on nonetheless, often in good humor, especially when Cosetta Cristiani adopted clown makeup and took a good-natured pounding in the tooth pulling gag. For visitors not demanding quantity, it is a highly entertaining hour and a half.

"Finale is the familiar Cristianis leapers, climaxed with Bennie flipping over the show's four elephants. He and Dave Bartok supervise the show. Remo Cristiani and Jack Beebe are in the office and the front gate is handled by Chita Cristiani and Tina (Mrs. Dave) Bartok. Two and three day stands were the case on Long Island, too long for reasonable business, it was believed in retrospect.

"Other familiar faces with it include Col. Calvin (Curley) Miller, announcer and concert attraction with his wife and daughter; trumpeter Chuck Schlarbaum, band leader, and the Cristianis. Daviso Cristiani's excellent dressage number is a highlight, following the appearance of his stunning offspring, Antoinette Cristiani Bartok, in high school riding. Dave Bartok has the hippo Goliath on the midway. Other staffers include Paul Cristiani as

promotion manager, Nadio Cristiani at the side show, and Joe Smega, concession manager.

"Performance: Grand entry, bringing on national flags borne by Bonita Armstrong, Toni Cristiani, Jeannie Kuhn, Mrs. Calvin Miller, Christine Jones and Jane Cristiani; clown tooth gag; wire acts by Jeannie Kuhn and Toni Cristiani, and foot juggling by Anita Fornasari; Liberty horses, Curley Miller; Cristianis teeterboard act; baby elephant, Tommy Armstrong.

"Concert announcement; clown potato gag; web number, with three girls up; trampoline act, with Bennie, Cosetta, Olivio and Little Bennie Cristiani, plus Italo Fornasari; high school horse, Toni Cristiani; dressage, Daviso Cristiani; musical clown gag; riding act with Cosetta and others; four elephants, worked by Tommy and Juanita Armstrong; Cristianis leapers, finale. Seven clowns, more or less, handle the comedy."

The August 17 *Amusement Business* reported: "A spurt of activity saw the United Nations Circus set up its tent in 43 minutes to make the scheduled matinee in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. The canvas trucks pulled into place at 2 p.m. A big crowd was on hand as both canvas and seating went up. It proved a profitable visit with turnaway audiences for both performances, July 31.

"Encouraging business also resulted at

David Bartok and his hippo Goliath. *Amusement Business* photo.



the July 30 visit to Somerset with two jammed houses reported by Paul Cristiani, special advance agent. At Greensburg on August 1, a two-thirds house saw the matinee. Business following the tour of Long Island has been excellent, it was said."

The show played two dates in Ohio at Syracuse and Aberdeen on August 7 and 8. After seven stands in Kentucky United Nations entered Tennessee at Gallatin on August 17 for a tour of six towns. The rest of August was played in North Carolina. A two day stand was played in Charleston, South Carolina. The show closed in Jessup, Georgia on September 10 after being attached.

The equipment went back to each of the partners. It is not known how the additional trucks were divided. Bartok, using the Bartok Circus title, advertised in a 1964 spring edition of *Amusement Business* to provide a show for sponsored dates and fairs. He did not tour an under-canvas show in 1964.

Remo Cristiani joined out in the spring of 1964 with the International Hippodrome Circus owned by Ray Beaudet and Neil Berk. This show played indoor dates before going under-canvas in June. It is thought that some of Remo Cristiani's under canvas equipment may have been the basis for this show.

The breakup of the partnership was not amicable. Apparently both parties understood the other was paying the government taxes. The IRS foreclosed on both partners' property to pay taxes.

David Bartok, at age 25, died on November 3 in Sarasota. He had suffered an injury in a minor auto accident on October 26 that may have contributed to his death, precipitated by a ruptured blood vessel at the circus winter quarters on October 27.

Doc Bartok later returned to the sawdust trail with the Famous Bartok Circus.

Bill Elbirn, Joe Bradbury and the Circus World Museum provided material for this article.





TEXAS JACK



PAWNEE BILL



101 RANCH Old Timers and Collectors  
INVITE YOU  
To The



MILLER BROTHERS



LUCILLE MULHALL  
PRINCESS WENONA  
ETC.

KEN MAYNARD

GENEAUTRY  
ROY ROGERS  
HOPALONG CASSIDY  
ETC.



TOM MIX



ALL CIRCUSES and  
WILD WEST SHOWS

Locally & Nationally Advertised

CONTACT  
SHOWCHAIRMEN

#### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

#### MILLER BROTHERS 101 RANCH 100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Presented by  
101 RANCH OLD TIMERS AND 101 RANCH COLLECTORS  
\*\* August 21-22, 1993 \*\*

101 RANCH WILD WEST SHOW OF COLLECTIBLES  
Buy-Sell-Trade-Display

101 Ranch 16mm Silent Films

BOB EDGAR

One of the last of the Old West Sharp Shooters  
and developer of Historic  
TRAIL TOWN AND MUSEUM OF THE OLD WEST  
in Cody, Wyoming

LASH LA RUE

Whip Artist and Western Movie Star

SERGE DARRIGRAND

National Tom Mix Look-Alike & Trick Shooter  
& His Trained Horse RASH

PAUL MIX

Tom Mix Relative & Author of  
"The Life and Legend of Tom Mix"

The LE CLAIR FAMILY INDIAN DANCERS

INVITED GUESTS

Families of G. W. Miller

ALL Old Timers from the 101 Ranch  
Including

MONTIE MONTANA & BEN JOHNSON  
Champion Trick Roper & Rodeo Champion  
& Show Performer & Movie Star  
Performers with the 101 Ranch

Downtown Parade - August 21, 1993

PRCA & WPRA 101 Wild West Rodeo - August 18-21, 1993  
Featuring World Champions, Rangler Bullfights &  
JOHN PAYNE "The One Arm Bandit"

Presented by  
The 101 Ranch Rodeo Foundation

#### WILD WEST SHOW OF COLLECTIBLES

100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION  
START PLANNING NOW

AUGUST 21st & 22nd, 1993  
E.W. Marland Mansion & Estate - Ponca City, Oklahoma

#### IN ONE PLACE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME

DEALERS and COLLECTORS  
OF  
COWBOYS - COWGIRLS - WESTERN MOVIE STARS - INDIANS

#### Open To The Public

Sat. 9:00-6:00 • Sun. 9:00-4:00 • Admission \$2.50 per day  
Children under 12 with Parents - Free  
6 ft. TRADE & DISPLAY TABLES \$45.00 • \$25.00 1st TABLE for  
Members of 101 Ranch Old Timers & Collectors  
Exhibitor set-up Friday Noon

RUTH & JERRY L. MURPHEY  
10701 Timbergrove Lane  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78410  
(512) 241-2213

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24 Hour Guards

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INFORMATION

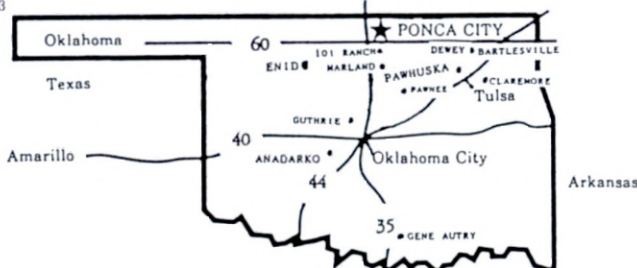
WILL ROGERS



ANNIE OAKLEY



BUCK JONES



#### PONCA CITY

- Pioneer Woman Statue & Museum
- The Cultural Center-1st E.W. Marland Home
- 101 Old Timers Museum In Basement
- E.W. Marland's 55 Room Mansion & Estate (101 RANCH 100th ANNIVERSARY SITE)
- Bill Pickett's Grave
- 101 Ranch Site-Highway 156 between Ponca City and Marland
- Kaw Lake
- Cherokee Strip Centennial Celebration September 16-19, 1993

MARLAND (BLISS) - Was Headquarters Of The 101 Ranch

PAWHUSKA - Osage Tribal Museum

DEWEY - Tom Mix Museum

BARTLESVILLE - Wooloroc Museum

TULSA - Thomas Gilcrease Institute Of American History  
And Art

CLAREMORE - Will Rogers Memorial

- Davis Gun Collection

PAWNEE - Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West Museum

ENID - Cherokee Strip Museum

OKLAHOMA CITY - National Cowboy Hall Of Fame and  
Western Heritage Center

ANADARKO - Indian City U.S.A.  
- Southern Plains Museum  
- American Indian Exposition  
August 16-21, 1993

GUTHRIE - Capital Of Oklahoma Territory 1890-1907  
First Capital Of State Of Oklahoma 1907-1910  
- One of the largest districts on the National  
Register of Historic Places-400 blocks containing  
more than 2000 buildings.  
- International Tom Mix Festival  
September 9-12, 1993

GENE AUTRY - Gene Autry Museum



**T**he circus is an international institution, presented on all continents and in most countries in the same or similar style. There are not many cultures that do not have the circus as a recognizable popular entertainment. It is accepted and attended, probably even applauded, wherever it appears. And it seems to me that something so universally popular, while perhaps adding little or nothing to the wisdom of the ages, is the sort of institution that it would be difficult to object to.

However, in one section of the United States, serious objections were raised in the past, and, more importantly, actions were taken in support of the attitude. That this region was New England you know from my title, but it is also of interest to know that in no other part of North America did the bias toward popular entertainment affect that entertainment as much as it did in the Northeastern states. Echoes of the attitude survived in New England as late as 1940.

An 1849 conference of clergymen produced a statement that went: "... there is an increasing tendency among our brethren and sisters ... to countenance certain fashionable and sinful places of amusement, such as dancing parties, theatrical and circus performances. Such amusements we believe to be wholly inconsistent with Christian character, destructive of vital piety, ruinous to the religious impression of the rising generation."<sup>1</sup>

This was not an unusual declaration, in fact, we would describe it as typical of the times. The objection to arenic performances had its foundation in anti-theatre bias. The circus was included because, in the public's eye, it was not greatly different from the theatre and, indeed, the managers themselves did little to distinguish between the two types of entertainment. The circus was introduced to America in 1793, fifty years after the introduction of the spoken drama, and it inherited whatever prejudices there were against the theatre.

From its beginnings the theatre had combined types of entertainment. Drama, farce, and athletic skills were all seen on the same program. A serious play would have ropedancers on stage between the acts and be followed by a slapstick farce. Showmen felt, apparently with good rea-

# THE YANKEE AND THE CIRCUS

By Stuart Thayer

son, that an audience would not sit through a serious drama if they thought that was all they were going to see. West Hill explains this as the result of the middle class audience of the Federal era desiring contrived endings, sentimental comedies and musical afterpieces.<sup>2</sup> No Dryden or Sheridan or Goldsmith for them.

Later, theatre managers adopted the practice of borrowing acts directly from the circus. Programs failing for lack of custom were buttressed by the addition of equestrian displays. These were usually presented in front of the stage, a portion of the pit being turned into a ring. It is not uncommon to find more and more of the circus in a theatre as the season waned and audiences became jaded with the drama. In time, the circus did the same thing, offering spoken drama to bolster the ring performance. Such events were in the period prior to the adoption of the canvas tent when circus troupes performed in wooden arenas. Thus, the dramatic house would partake of the ring and the circus arena of the drama so that in the public mind there was little to distinguish them one from another. Then, in 1816 James West came to America from England with his large circus troupe which was well-versed in what we now call hippodrama. These were a series of

plays featuring horses. Whole troops of knights or cavalry or cossacks rode back and forth on the stage lending realism to dramas of rescue and war. These were extremely popular in Europe and were so for a long time. In America they flourished from West's introduction of them in 1816 until the use of the canvas tent became popular, about 1828. The important thing about them, as far as our subject is concerned, is that they reinforced the idea of the circus and theatre being the same or nearly so.

The circus was introduced into America by a Scotsman, John Bill Ricketts. He was a rider trained in England who transferred the genre without change from that country to this. It was in 1793 that he opened his arena in Philadelphia and presented the first multi-act program in this country.

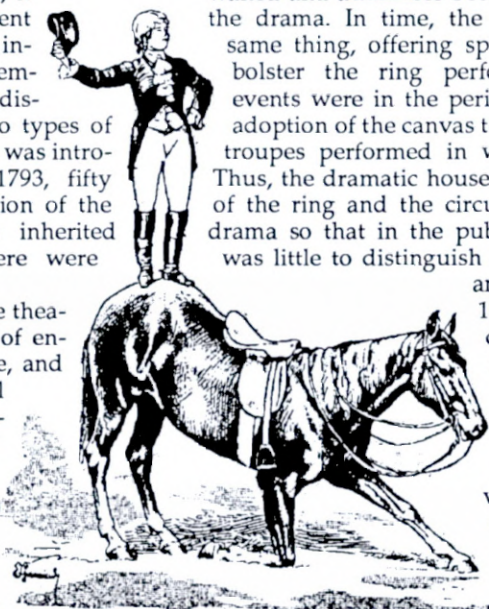
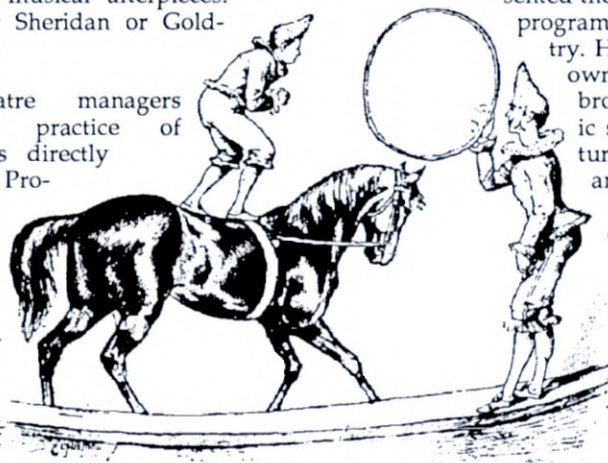
He featured his own riding, his brother's acrobatic skills, the posturing of a clown and, within weeks, a rope dancer.

Ricketts did not invent the circus. That honor goes to one Philip As-  
tley, a retired dragoon, who in

1771 presented the first multi-act circus in England, and the world, in an open space near Westminster Bridge in London. As-  
tley's earliest rival in London was Charles Hughes, proprietor of the Royal Circus. Ricketts was a pupil of Hughes.

In America, Ricketts was immediately successful and played for four months in Philadelphia and then for three more in New York in an arena near the Battery. In the winter of 1793 and the spring of 1794 his troupe visited Charleston, Norfolk, Richmond and Baltimore before returning to Philadelphia for a second season. Since that time there have been only one or two years in which there has not been a circus performance in the United States.

The genre became more and more popular over time and was offered in more cities each year until, by the time of the settlement of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, it was the leading professional amusement in the country. Nothing approached the popularity of the circus until the advent of vaudeville—a strictly urban entertainment. As rural entertainment the circus was not to be surpassed





until the common use of radio.

Having introduced the circus to America, Ricketts in 1795 introduced it into New England. In May of that year he built an arena in Boston and performed in it for over two months. He also gave shows in Providence and Hartford, before returning to his arena in New York.

In Hartford, for reasons we will explain, he used a canvas enclosure, a circular wall behind which he performed. In Boston and Providence, however, he built the more traditional wooden arenas. These buildings, quite temporary, often not even painted, were constructed in each city where halls could not be rented, which meant building them almost everywhere they performed. They were as large as eighty feet in diameter with walls from eight to eighteen feet high. Sometimes they were roofed, sometimes not; if so, the roof would be a pointed thing rising twenty or thirty feet. They were circular in shape, based on the ring which was at their center. The pit area, usually without seats, surrounded the ring. Raised boxes, each with three to five benches in them, lay against the outer walls. On average the capacity of these arenas was eight hundred people. Persons who could not afford tickets often stood outside or climbed on the roof to watch through cracks in the jerry-built structures. In Boston in September, 1796 so many climbed onto Lailson's Circus they collapsed the roof. This mode of operation persisted until the adoption of the tent in 1825 and in the winter for some seasons thereafter.

Ricketts had no opposition, as such, to his appearances in New England. Being the first such showman to appear, it was not likely he would; however, he was affected by Connecticut law on his visit to Hartford. We mentioned that he made use of a canvas enclosure there in 1796, the only instance we have of him doing so in his six-year career in America.

The reason for this was that it was illegal to give a theatrical performance in Connecticut and had been since 1773.<sup>3</sup> Ricketts would have had to obtain a permit from the city fathers in order to erect an arena. Since his performance was illegal it would have been denied him.

This 1773 law banned theatrical performances of any kind and it was similar to ones passed in every colony excepting

Virginia and Maryland. However, by the time the circus appeared in 1793 most of these ordinances had been repealed. Massachusetts, for instance, having done so in 1792. The Connecticut legislature, however, did not repeal their anti-theatrical laws with the advent of the circus. They simply amended them to include this new breach of the peace.

They rewrote the ordinance of 1773 in 1798 and it then forbade tricks of tumbling, rope-walking, puppet shows and any uncommon feats of agility of the body, if performed for money. A fine of not less than sixty nor more than two hundred dollars was set.

Vermont, visited much later by circuses, forbade their appearance in an 1836 law that read: "Circus riding, theatrical exhibitions, juggling or sleight-of-hand, ventiloquism and magic arts shall be, and are, declared to be common and public nuisances and offenses against the state."<sup>4</sup>

The Connecticut law was tested in 1826 when James Hunter brought a small circus troupe to Hartford. Hunter, an Englishman, had come to America in 1822 to work for the Price and Simpson circus. He was the first man to ride a horse "in the rude state of nature," what we call bareback riding. He singlehandedly revolutionized the art of circus riding and provided a standard against which all riders have since been measured. He performed in Hartford from the 10th to the 13th of March at which time he was arrested and charged with committing rope-dancing, tumbling and various feats of uncommon dexterity or agility of the body. The case was titled *Sundry Inhabitants of Hartford vs. James Hunter*. It was heard on March 28, 1826.

After hearing the evidence the jury returned twice, stating that they could not reach a verdict. On the third attempt they found Hunter guilty of rope-dancing and extraordinary

feats of agility and dexterity of body. The judge then fined him sixty dollars, the minimum under the statute.

One of the more interesting reactions to the trial appeared in the *Baltimore Patriot*

of April 14. It asked: "Is there also a law in Connecticut prohibiting certain feats of the mind in the legislature that no one has performed an extraordinary feat of liberality and good sense by blotting from the statute book . . . such a relic of the dark ages?"

Whatever the reaction of the outside world, Connecticut's action in the case certainly discouraged more visits by circuses.

We find none there until 1852, twenty-six years after Hunter's conviction.

If circuses played there in the intervening years they did not advertise the fact. As late as 1859 James M. Nixon's troupe, during an engagement in Hartford, did not use the word "circus" in their ads. The law itself was finally repealed in 1860.

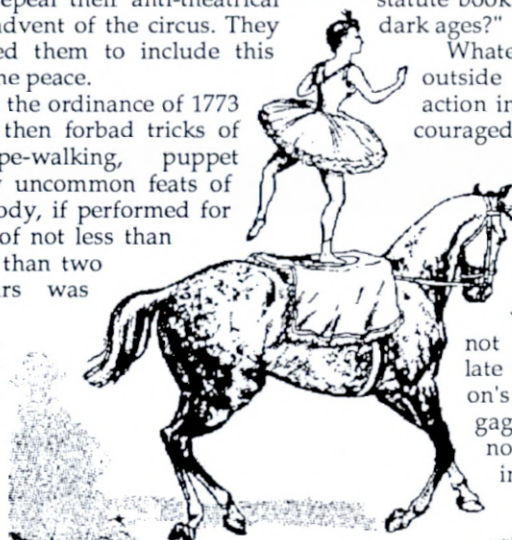
A very early commentator on American manners, Michael Chevalier, wrote in 1836: "It is from the [Yankee] that the country has taken a general tone of austere severity that is religious and even bigotted because of him all sorts of amusements which among [Europeans] are considered innocent relaxations, are here proscribed as immoral pleasures."<sup>5</sup>

He was referring, as we know, to the Puritan ethic. And, indeed, that was the code by which most New Englanders lived and by which they preferred to be governed.

Puritans and their successors in thought held an activist view of God which called for an intense promotion of laborious and dutiful living. Man was on earth to serve God's purpose and work was the essential element of that purpose. This made for an active people, a society working hard to do God's bidding. It was a serious society, mentally serious, in which make-believe was a worldly compromise with the devil. The theatre, and by association the circus, were make-believe.

This Calvinist approach, while not universally adhered to, was followed by New Englanders of power and persuasion. Their attitudes had strength because they imposed a zeal upon those who held them and this zeal was expressed by their legislators and by those speaking from the pulpit.

Henry Ward Beecher, the famous clergyman, wrote a book titled *Lectures to Young Men* which was published in 1844. He was rather specific as to what he saw as the evils of amusements. He listed them as:





1. A waste of time.
2. A waste of money.
3. Incompatible with ordinary pursuits (i.e., they made the kitchen and the shop seem dull by comparison).

4. They engage one in bad company.
5. Gamblers, circus riders, actors and jockeys live off society without returning any equivalent for their support.

6. Such pursuits demoralize men and corrupt youth.<sup>6</sup>

This volume was a popular source of youthful etiquette, went through many printings and was still being published in 1890.

It was not only from the pulpit that one heard the circus castigated. The *Hartford Connecticut Observer* in 1826 editorialized quite closely to Beecher's arguments. It objected to the circus because it was a waste of time, a corruption of taste, dissipating serious reflection and holding out to the young the temptation to obtain the means of attendance. Older visitors were seen at the circus whose families lacked the necessities of life and whose creditors must fail of receiving their just dues.

It is interesting to note that in none of these polemical attacks is the content of the circus mentioned. Only its purpose, or more properly, lack of purpose, is criticized. This could have been because none of the critics knew what went on in the arena, but this appears doubtful. More likely, it was because there was nothing in the performance itself that was objectionable. These bad men did not do bad things. They wasted their time and that of the audience, true, and they wasted talents that God had given them, but an exhibition of athletic skills held out no moral pretensions, as did the theatre, nor hope of gain, as did the racetrack.

Baseball, when it began to take up so much of the leisure time of nineteenth-century Americans, was similarly damned. Yet, it, too, was but an exhibition of skills. Chasing a little ball about a field may have been silly, but of itself hardly harmful. Activities concomitant to baseball exhibitions such as gambling and public drunkenness, again, effort with no good purpose, no spiritual return, caught the eye and anger of the pious and nearly doomed the game.

To this point in our discussion the Yan-

kee opposition to amusements has been based on precepts that were really older than the nation. And, as we said, they were strong because the society was homogeneous and of similar attitude toward existence. But this homogeneity was challenged after the Revolution and especially after the War of 1812 when the great exodus to the West was begun. A sort of "home-grown" set of rules was established. Douglas Miller characterized this shift as occurring between the War of 1812 and the age of Jackson. And he says that America changed from a tenacious, traditional society, fearful of innovation to a shifting, restless and insecure world bent on finding quicker ways to wealth than before.<sup>7</sup>

It was at this time that the colonial society, dominated by a landowning aristocracy and the leaders of the churches, began to dissolve. The old order was challenged by democratization, by religious dissent and by a rise of irreverence to class and status. The farmer and the wage-earner, the "common men" of historiography, were gaining insight into the blessings of a less restricted existence. They were abetted in this by the rising merchant class who were largely outside the political and social circles they thought their new prosperity entitled them to inhabit. The Federal aristocracy, the landowners, sons of the men who had established the colonial society, were alarmed by these political and social pretensions. They were also alarmed by the Whisky Rebellion, Thomas Jefferson and, above all, by Andrew Jackson.

The political aristocracy and the leaders of the Calvinist churches began, about 1815, an attempt to reassert their control over the society. They wanted to maintain the rigid class structure and strict church attendance upon which they thought the society was based. By combining an emphasis on moral behavior and an interest in religious instruction they hoped to end the menace to the status quo.

Benevolent societies were organized. The most famous of these being the American Home Missionary Society, the American Tract Society and the American Sunday School Union. The education of ministers was subsidized, roving ministries were supported and thousands of

Bibles printed which were to be handed out across the land. All this was done in an attempt to lead men back into the Christian life, which included, of course, proper political and social conduct.

This was guided by the precepts that those who lived proper lives prospered; that those who deserved to be rich were rich. They deplored the rising crime and incidence of riot, the spending of money on worthless amusements that characterized the poor people of the day. And, though they seldom said it, they also deplored mass immigration, Roman Catholicism, trade unions and people who did not pay their bills.

An editorial comment in a Belfast, Maine newspaper of 1847 illustrates this attitude.

"Got a paper to spare?"

"Yes, sir, here's one of our last. Would you like to subscribe, sir, and take it regularly?"

"I would—but I am too poor."

"That man had just returned from the circus, which cost fifty cents; lost time from his farm, fifty cents; whisky, judging by the smell, at least fifty cents—making a dollar and a half actually thrown away, and then begging for a newspaper, alleging that he was too poor to pay for it!"<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the objections to popular amusements, that they were a waste of time and a waste of money, were given new life as the half-century mark was neared.

Yet, with all this objection by what might be called the leaders of the society the circus and the theatre and horse racing survived, in fact they were all approaching very prosperous times in New England and elsewhere. Why was this so? We suggest that the lives of the people who made up the audience were in large part responsible for the response.

Robie Macauley wrote: "We are all very lucky not to have been born as ordinary Americans in the nineteenth century. An immense percentage of life had to be devoted to sheer work and drudgery. How infrequent and scant were any pleasures."<sup>9</sup>

Carl Bode agreed when he said that by today's standards leisure was rare, the workday forbiddingly long and the enjoyment of life limited.<sup>10</sup> To the farmer's family, and 85% of the population was rural in 1850, the only holidays from their dull round were New Year's Day, the Fourth of July and, later, Christmas. Add to these the county fair and circus day as near-holidays, at least respite from work, and one can see how the Sabbath, if it was kept, would be anticipated for its idleness alone.

So, when a resolution such as the one passed by a Vermont congregation read





that attendance upon circus exhibitions encouraged a set of idlers, spendthrifts and debauchers and created a resort of the loose, the idle and the wicked, it is not surprising that it was not adhered to by all the members.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the circus mirrored virtues understood and accepted by the rural population. Such things as courage and physical strength and the intuitive knowledge of animals, as well as a complete mastery of the animals appealed to these people. And following a formula that emphasized these qualities is what kept the circus in the forefront of nineteenth-century American culture. The audience understood the natural world and the circus reflected that world.

Years later, the poet Joyce Kilmer wrote: "The press agent may, without fear of contradiction, call the circus religious. In the old days he frequently called it a 'moral exhibition.' This was to forestall or answer the attacks of the Puritan divines of New England, who railed against the great canvas monster which invaded the sanctity of their villages.

"Moral" was justly used. For surely courage, patience and industry are the three qualities most obviously exhibited by the silk and spangle-clad men and women who dance on the perilous wire, fly through space on swiftly swinging bars and teach a spaniel's tricks to the man-eating lion."

We must not assume that the populace turned their backs on the reformers and that it ended there. The bias toward popular entertainment continued in one form or another and does to this day. But, essentially, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century the circus had achieved a position in the culture too important for it to be considered immoral. And, in the years before the Civil War, when the reform movement was strongest, other issues came to occupy the men of persuasion in the society. Temperance and the abolition of slavery became more important to them than whether or not people paid their bills before they went to the circus. Prosperity changed attitudes—a full pocketbook is the greatest enemy of reform. The attitudes toward money and what should be bought with it also changed. As the churches became more wealthy their economic arguments lost their validity. And all these arguments were larger than just New England, they

were national concerns. The Yankee's voice was but one among many.

I don't think we refer to Yankees as an ethnic group today. We speak of Yankee traits, but they are as often found in Missouri as in Vermont; I think they are mainly the conservative attitudes of rural people anywhere. I know that some of my former neighbors in Maine take delight in pointing out the odd behavior of tourists, but since so many of the tourists are from Connecticut or Massachusetts it's a bit difficult to assign these remarks to Yankee chauvinism. But there definitely was a Yankee at one time, apart

from everyone else. I can recall my father telling of when, as a boy, he asked his mother what nationality our family was. Her reply was that we were Yankees. That settled it for her.

I think that as the nation grew and people travelled about they found local customs and regional attitudes to be of interest and so they commented upon them, mostly in print. Certainly, the circus travelled as much as any institution and the Yankee was a type to the showmen, just as were Irishmen, blacks, Cajuns and Indians. We find tales in the literature speaking to the supposed peculiarities of all these groups.

W. C. Coup was the manager of several circuses, including six years at the helm of P. T. Barnum's show. In his autobiography he told this story: "Just after the war many southerners regarded a Yankee as an unending wonder. They had heard so much of Yankee ingenuity that they came to regard a Northerner as a curiosity. We advertised that we had with our show a number of Yankees from various states. The crier dilated upon the wonderful ingenuity of the Yankee and told the people that if they had any old clocks or other things which needed fixing that they might bring them and watch the Yankees fix them. Our first attempt to put this scheme into operation turned out somewhat disastrously. It was Saturday and the people flocked to the Yankees. When they saw,

however, that the Yankees are a good deal like other people we narrowly escaped a riot."<sup>12</sup>

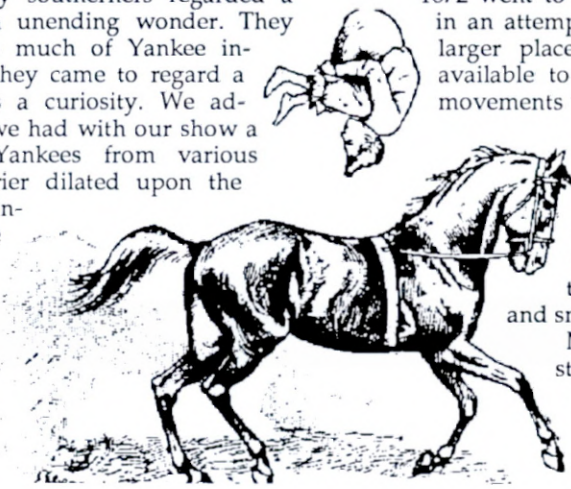
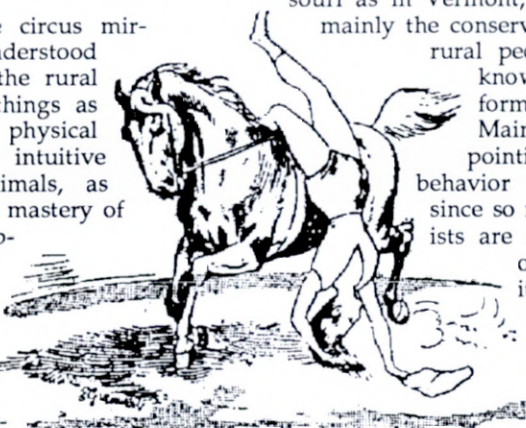
In time, as we know, the Yankee was less of a curiosity, but his habits persisted and showmen were aware of them. For one thing, the vaunted thriftiness of New Englanders affected their show-going proclivities. Advertised wonders meant nothing to them; they didn't patronize shows they didn't know.

Walter L. Main was a circus owner for over forty years and he once observed that he had seen plenty of shows go on the rocks way down east, so many he couldn't recall all the names. Experience taught him that every circus that invaded the New England states lost money unless they had built a reputation over time. The Yankees will not go to the circus unless they have confidence, he said.<sup>13</sup>

P. T. Barnum's circus planned a circuit of Maine in 1871, but had to cancel it after a few performances because the towns were not large enough to provide audiences that would pay the cost of appearing. Barnum's show had three hundred employees, about two hundred-fifty horses and a hundred wagons. Imagine a caravan of that size descending on a small New England village. The circus advertised by posting bills within seventy-five miles of its intended stands and the railroads ran very profitable excursion trains to the show grounds. In Waterville, Maine, for instance two twenty-five car trains came from Bangor and Belfast to just about double Waterville's population for the day. The picture of humanity that this event brings to mind indicates what a gala affair circus day had become.

It was this circus, Barnum's, that in 1872 went to rail transportation in an attempt to show only in larger places, a premise not available to them when their movements were limited to the distance horses could walk in a day. It was at this time that the first distinctions were made between large towns and small towns.

Maine, of course, is still a place of small population and a poor economic climate. It gained early on the reputation of a poor show state and had to be content with visits by smaller shows, but the rest of New England, once they repealed their laws against the circus, proved to be a good place in which to perform. There were ex-





cellent roads, a fine railroad network and a large industrial base, the workers in which have traditionally supported popular entertainment.

Barnum and others advertised themselves as operating "great moral shows" just as Joyce Kilmer pointed out. They used the endorsements of clergymen in their ads and admitted clergymen and their families free of charge. To be moral was to be acceptable and it would be difficult to find immorality in something as unpretentious as the circus. No politics, no nationality, no grossness were allowed to flower there, except those that were generally accepted. Patriotism, chauvinism and love of animals were exalted. Muscular strength and athletic ability, which, as we said, were the very things the audience admired, were the centerpieces of the performance. And it was these values unchanged in the circus over the years that eventually left the institution with a largely rural audience, in the sense that sophisticated people turned to other things. Today it has regressed even further on the cultural spectrum, being primarily an entertainment for children.

Aside from the objections based on religious principles and those rising from the inclusion of the circus with all popular amusements, there were nineteenth-century objections to ladies in tights and the crude, though never obscene, bantering of the clowns. It became the usual thing for a circus to include in their advertisements a phrase such as, "The Manager, in soliciting the public patronage, would respectfully state that nothing will be introduced in the performance that can in the least offend the most delicate and fastidious persons, but the whole will be conducted with that order and respectability calculated to insure the patronage of a genteel society."

As for ladies in tights, the city fathers of Pittsburgh passed an ordinance in 1840 forbidding their appearance and several circuses rather proudly, it seems to me, advertised that no women were on their roster. These were short lived objections, for some reason.

Here is the attitude of the editor of an 1847 Amesbury, Massachusetts newspaper: "We have made fruitless efforts to think of some good which may result from the circus. But we find nothing in such performances which can by any pos-

sibility promote the moral, industrial, physical or pecuniary well-being of humanity.

"In the first place we find about a score of able-bodied men who in no way add to the wealth of the country—not even the worth of a potato. Who do nothing to increase the amount of intelligence—and who do nothing towards elevating public morals [or] refining the manners of the people.

"And, finally, they carried from this village money enough to have purchased a good course of scientific lectures for the coming winter, or to have purchased a very good library."<sup>14</sup>

It would seem that asking the circus to elevate public morals or refine the manners of the locals was a bit too much to expect from something as unpretentious as a circus. However, this editorial expresses an intellectual attitude, not the polemic of virtue in the examples we've used, but based on the needs of the society. We see the same arguments today in relation to whether money should be spent on weapons or welfare. As such, these attitudes go beyond

New England. They can be found in newspapers across the country in the last half of that century.

The Industrial Revolution brought New England up-to-date, brought its views in line with the rest of the nation. The old ethics were strained, as Miller said, by a shuffling and restless society finding quick ways to wealth.

Yankee prejudice disappeared in the face of such yearnings, overpowered, we might say, by the acceptance of the circus and the skills it honored which were based on the national psyche. Rural America in the nineteenth century took on mythic proportions. Henry Nash Smith phrased it as the independent farmer drawing upon his own resources. By his virtue and his will power and by his drawing upon the benevolence of nature he stood as the hero of a manifest destiny.<sup>15</sup>

We've tried to show that the circus was a mirror of all this. We spoke of Barnum's show advertising seventy-five miles from the show grounds. They put up "flaming bills" as a contemporary phrase had it, large and colorful posters depicting the marvels of Asia and Africa and Europe. Full-page newspaper ads and couriers and handbills by the thousands trum-

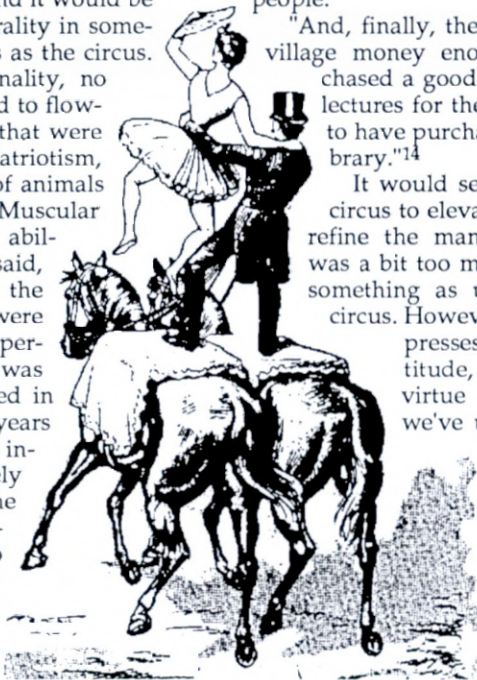
peted the wonders to be seen on circus day. And they arrived with their herds of elephants, strings of beautiful horses, trains of gaudily painted wagons and the athletes and pretty women and funny clowns who were its human symbols. Think of the effect of all that glorious experience on persons of that simpler time.

Hamlin Garland spoke of a country boy's reaction to it in these words: "On the way home, he had no words to say, no thoughts which were articulate. . . . The splendor of the pageant which had come and gone lingered in his world like the memory of gold and crimson clouds at sunset."<sup>16</sup>

It was an age of opulence and splendor and the circus was very much a part of it. In the face of its attractions these objections we have alluded to, these arguments that it was a waste of time and a waste of money and led one to associate with low company became poor arguments, indeed. The Yankee divines and the purposeful businessmen simply had to stand aside and let the show go on.

#### Footnotes

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### Introduction

Several years ago I wrote an article on Nixon's Royal Circus and Grizzley Adams Bear Menagerie. My main interest there was in Grizzley Adams, a fellow Massachusetts native, who struck my fancy in my early days of research into the circus. Adams was a character and certainly the star of that show in the summer of 1861. As I researched that article I was introduced to another individual, Ella Zoyara, a man who rode as a woman and created quite a stir. My interest was piqued and I began looking into this controversial figure. The fact that there were no fewer than three Zoyaras mud-died the waters and made research somewhat difficult. Taking Stuart Thayer's advice that Zoyara needed a biography, I began in earnest researching the article. Doing research of the mid 19th century is, at best, a difficult task. Dates and facts conflict, and contemporary accounts are limited. Newspapers provide dates but do not always provide unbiased accounts of the facts. To my knowledge, what follows is the true story of the man-maiden, Ella Zoyara.

**T**he history of the circus has been liberally spiced with many events and individuals who lent a bit of mystery and the bizarre to the genre. One of the most controversial of these individuals was the man-maiden, Ella Zoyara. While other men have played the part of women in the circus, none have been able to create the interest and controversy that Zoyara did.

Zoyara did not just happen. She was the creation of a showman named Spencer Q. Stokes. Stokes (1819-1888) claims to have begun his career in 1832. In subsequent years he rode with various concerns where he was a junior rider presented as Master Spencer Stokes. He held the Master title until he turned 18 when he was with Nathan Howes' Eagle Circus. By 1844 he graduated to riding master, a job he held on the Howes and Mabie Circus. It was perhaps around this time that he invented the riding mechanic which allowed riders to practice new tricks without the threat of injury. This device is still in use today. In 1846 Stokes was with the new show of Eaton Stone, Den Stone and Thomas McCol-lum, called the Great Western Circus, and Stokes was its principal agent. The show opened in New Orleans, toured along the Mississippi and then returned to New Orleans in the fall. As was the custom of the day skilled persons would take apprentices under their tutelage. It was here that Stokes came upon a lad of seven who was apprenticed to him. The boy was of Creole origin, with a pretty

## WILL THE REAL ZOYARA PLEASE STAND UP

**By Robert Kitchen**

face and long dark curly hair. Whether it was these features that attracted the boy to Stokes we can't say. In any event Stokes took him under his wing and he became Stokes apprentice. His name was Sam Omar Kingsley and he was called Sam, Little Sammy or Stoke's Sammy. Stokes had other apprentices as well, another lad named Leon Leroy and one Emma Sampson, who eventually became Stokes wife. She rode under the name of Emma Stokes.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of the circus was the display of horsemanship and all shows had riders, both male and female. Young male apprentices were also worked into "Mercury" and other acts. They were advertised as "Master" so and so. At one stand a competing show had a young female rider, a Mlle Wells (most probably a daughter of James Wells) and Stokes noted that it did more business than his show. The lesson was not lost on Stokes. He conceived the idea of training a boy to ride as a girl. Not only would he have his

Spencer Q. Stokes, the man who created Ella Zoyara. Albert Conover collection.



young lady rider but would also have someone more athletic who could perform feats that no woman could achieve. For a while he used Leon Leroy to play the part of a girl.

The deception was successful and business immediately picked up. Stokes was evidently much impressed with the results and became determined to create a more lasting deception. This is where Little Sammy came in. Stokes began to train the boy as a rider, but went a bit further with the

training. He dressed young Sam in the clothes of a young lady and provided him with Emma Sampson and other young ladies as female companions. Both Emma and Sammy were elegantly dressed, and both received instructions in sewing, embroidery and other diversions of the female sex. Sammy was perfect in the part. As time went on and company personnel changed, few in the company were aware that Sammy was really a boy. Stokes named the youngster Ella. Advertisements of the day show an Ella Stokes as a rider. It has been assumed that this was Stokes daughter. Actually it was little Sammy in disguise. Whether natural or learned, Sam picked up the mannerisms of a girl. By 1851 Sam had become established as a female rider, performing feats that no other young lady could accomplish. The charade was complete and Stokes was ready to move on to bigger and better things. In 1851 Stokes managed the St. Louis Amphitheater until May when he departed as manager. Stokes and his entourage were ready for the introduction of Miss Ella to Europe.

### In Europe

In 1852 Stokes and Ella joined a company in England, formed by James Hernandez, Eaton Stone and Rufus Welch. It is interesting to note that it was about this time that Stokes may have married young Emma, who perhaps had reached the age of consent. Emma was to produce four daughters with Stokes. John Dingess in his manuscript history of the circus notes that Ella was born in England and Emma in Germany. Kate and Belle were born in the states. As for our Sam (Ella), Richard Hemmings in an interview with the *Billboard* in 1908 stated that he performed with Ella at Astley's (time may have clouded Hemmings memory and this might have been the Drury Lane Theater) in 1852 and then traveled through England with Ella and never had the slightest suspicion that Ella was not a girl. Hemmings reported that Ella had a faultless complexion of the brunette type. His features were per-



fect and of the most delicate and womanly character as were his hands and feet. His hair, of raven blackness, hung in luxuriant masses to his waist. Hemmings also reported that Ella was also very temperamental. Stokes on one occasion took Ella shopping and purchased long kid gloves for him. Ella, finding that they did not fit properly, became enraged, tore them off and threw them on the ground. After traveling throughout England the show returned to London where it performed at the Drury Lane Theater in 1853.<sup>2</sup>

After this the company split up and Stokes took Ella to the continent. There the show visited all of the major cities and Ella became the toast of the continent. By the time Ella reached the age of fifteen or so he was quite striking and this combined with his expert horsemanship attracted many males, including many of the aristocracy. Ella was the recipient of many passionate letters and valuable gifts.

The European tour was a fantasy. Princes Frederick and William of Prussia were so enthralled by Ella that manager Stokes was asked to bring him to Prussia. Berlin was played for 90 days under royal patronage and was most successful. From Berlin the show moved to Vienna for 90 days in the Karl Theater. It was here that Emperor Francis Joseph saw Ella and praised his performance. After Vienna the show moved onto the principal cities of Hungary, Poland and Italy, as well as other major cities on the continent. The tour was an artistic and financial success.

Several stories about Ella have come out of the European tour. While some embellishment might have occurred, it seems that for the most part these stories have some truth to them. One that Kingsley himself told was of a crowned head of Germany who fell in love with Ella and presented him with a diamond ring valued at several thousand dollars. When the show visited St. Petersburg in Russia, Ella was performing and the ring which fit rather loosely flew off of his finger. After the performance Ella searched for the ring, but to no avail. Ella was heartbroken. At a later performance, as he was riding round the ring, a glint of something caught his eye in the tanbark. He couldn't wait for the show to end. Upon its completion, Ella rushed to the ring to the spot he saw the glint, and lo and behold there was the ring.

In Moscow a Russian count is said to have fallen in love with Ella. He offered Stokes a large sum for an introduction to him. Stokes had certainly struck it rich.

While in Italy King Victor Emmanuel



Ella Zoyara. Author's collection.

saw the circus and became enthralled with Ella. He visited the circus many times and invited Ella to his abode. Ella attended accompanied by his woman servant, without whom he rarely appeared in public. The King of Italy presented Ella with a magnificent black stallion. Stokes immediately took possession of it and later sold it in Madrid when he ran into financial difficulties.

In 1857 Ella was back in England appearing with W. F. Walleth in an American and Continental troupe at the Drury Lane Theater. Ella and Stokes returned to the continent for an encore visit. Ella's apprenticeship with Stokes ended in 1858. It was reported that Stokes outfitted Kingsley with horses and all the accouterments to continue the act. Whether Stokes continued on as Ella's manager is not known. During the return visit to Germany Ella's true gender was somehow disclosed. The gentlemen who lavished their attentions and gifts on the young rider were most distressed and several sought to settle their embarrassment and deception at the point of a sword. Discretion being the better part of valor, Ella beat a hasty retreat back to London where he made one last appearance as Ella in Howes and Cushings Great United States Circus at the Alhambra in 1859. It was there that he was signed to a contract by James Nixon who was in Europe putting together a show to take back to the United States.

#### Return to America

In late 1859 James M. Nixon and W. A.

Moore were in Europe to frame a circus to play Niblo's Garden in the winter of 1859-1860. One of those acts was Ella, who now had added the last name of Zoyara. One would guess that Ella would take the name Zoyara upon reaching his 18th birthday when his apprenticeship to Stokes ended. There is no evidence that the name Zoyara was used in Europe and its derivation is unknown. Kingsley was now 19 years old, independent of Stokes and ready for his American debut. Kingsley received \$500 per week plus passage for himself and two servants, any medical bills, and the use of a horse and carriage when he required it. On January 16, 1860 Cooke's Royal Circus opened at Niblo's Garden. The featured equestrienne was Ella Zoyara. The reviewer for the *Clipper* gave the show a good review, but was taken back by the "foreign airs" exhibited by Zoyara as she entered the arena, feeling that she lost all of her native

grace by putting on such airs. The reviewer also noted that Zoyara had a fine physique and drew the attention of the male gender. Zoyara took great chances and when successful drew great rounds of applause. One feature of his act was to ride standing erect while the horse jumped a four foot picket. Later in the act he jumped through a high throne. This and other tricks caused him to have a very dangerous act, one that no other lady could duplicate. The reviewer reported that he would much rather have the act of Mlle Heloise (Sally Stickney), a more feminine rider, who was also on the bill. Shortly after the opening of the show Ella was again "discovered." The wags who sent flowers and notes to our Ella, unlike their European counterparts, simply melted into the night. There must have also been some consternation among the ladies who shared dressing rooms with Zoyara over the years. The *Clipper* of January 31, 1860 said: "If this person is a boy, then a most bare faced imposition has been practiced upon the American public by the management of the concern, and the sooner the public resent the fraud the better."

The *New York Clipper* of February 11, 1860 wrote: "It is generally conceded that the person called Zoyara at Niblo's is a male, the novelty of his riding has lost its charm, with the gentlemen at least, many of whom had made 'judies' of themselves by sending him bouquets and tender lines and other expressions of their good feelings. Before the reality of his sex was established, and while the question was yet in doubt, someone suggested that a com-



mittee of strong minded women be selected to wait upon Zoyara, and examine into the facts of the case; but the boy repudiated the matrons, and before another committee could be enlisted, the thing was out, the whole secret exposed, and the strong minded committee exploded. So we go. Humbug is the order of the day, and he who is the cleverest in imposing upon his fellows is sure to draw the dollars. Barnum was successful until he exposed his deceit and duplicity in his book, when that and eight day clocks, wound him up with a great turn. So will it be with Zoyara. If the imposition is not soon stopped, we fear there will be a public manifestation and examination not set down on the program."

The Zoyara affair brought a great deal of attention to the show. In March of 1860, Dan Rice, who was playing Philadelphia, issued a card denouncing Cooke's Zoyara. It seems that Rice had a Zoyara too and his was the original, so he contended. To further complicate matters a third Zoyara was appearing at Frank River's Melodeon Music Hall. Rice named Kingsley as the Cooke's Zoyara and Jimmy Yale as the Melodeon Music Hall version. Rice issued a challenge that each should be examined by a panel of ladies to see who in fact was the true Zoyara which had already been suggested back in January. His, he claimed, was a true hermaphrodite. Kingsley demurred and Yale disappeared. The controversy continued. By late May, George Christy's Minstrels, couldn't resist and included a burlesque of the circus at Niblo's. They advertised the Field of the Golden Cloth (a play on the title of the spec The Field of the Cloth of Gold) and Mlle. Zo—Whar—are—ya, the original myth and her horse. Since Kingsley was exposed in January and Rice didn't call foul until March, Rice's Zoyara must have been the forgery. No doubt she was a woman and not a hermaphrodite as Rice claimed. In any case the publicity generated by the controversy was invaluable to both shows.

The *Clipper* couldn't resist getting in its jibes and wrote: "Speaking of Zoyara reminds us of an accident that befell the Zoyara at Cooke's Circus some time last week. He was unfortunate enough to lose her balance while performing his bare-back act, and before she could recover himself down she went, sustaining an injury to one of his feet, which incapacitated her from appearing for a short time. He is again on hand, however, or, at least, on foot, astonishing spectators by her wonderful command over the horse."

The show closed at Niblo's on March 3rd, and travelled to Boston where it opened on the 5th at the Boston Theater.

Large audiences greeted the show and Zoyara was the great attraction. The *Clipper* reported that Zoyara was the recipient of many bouquets nightly, picking them up with quite an air. The article insinuated that management was the one providing the bouquets. The show stayed in Boston until April 7, then moved back to New York where it opened on April 9. At the end of May the show went to Brooklyn where it played under the name of Nixon's Equestrian Troupe. The show then tramped south to play Newark, Philadelphia, Baltimore and other points south.

Nixon, in partnership with P. T. Barnum, combined his Cooke's Royal Circus with the menagerie of Grizzley Adams and toured the show throughout New England in the summer of 1860. Adams was the star, and Zoyara and the others connected with the circus received little press. The only advertisement found with Zoyara's name was for the Newport date of August 13. (A detailed account of this show can be found in the author's "Cooke's Royal Circus with Grizzley Adams Bear Menagerie" in the January-February 1989 *Bandwagon*.) The show finished its summer tour by opening for a

Program for Nixon's Royal Circus with Ella Zoyara at Niblo's Garden in 1861. Author's collection.

# NIBLO'S GARDEN

---

James McIlhenny ..... Solo Lancers and Males  
 Acting Manager ..... Mr. T. Hart  
 Stage Manager ..... N. D. Clark  
 Herald Artist ..... G. Macle  
 Musical Director ..... John Cooke

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## RETURN HOME OF

# NIXON'S ROYAL CIRCUS

After an absence of six months, making a tour through all  
 The Southern States and the Island of Cuba  
 And achieving the greatest successes ever made by any

## EQUESTRIAN ESTABLISHMENT ON THIS CONTINENT.

### Thursday Evening, March 28th, 1861

## PROGRAMME:

1. CHINESE FESTIVAL—With Gymnastics by the Equestrians and Dances by the Russian Ballet Troupe—Galletti, Tophoff and Corps de Ballet.
2. Equestrian Piece ..... by ..... Mlle. Heloise
3. Solo Equilibrium ..... by ..... T. Armstrong
4. Exercises in Tumbling ..... by the ..... Company
5. Summertime Art of Horsemanship ..... by ..... Walter Roberts
6. L'Echelle Perilouse ..... by ..... W. Smith
7. The Olympians ..... by ..... Klondike and Sebastian

INTERMISSION OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

8. Perch ..... by ..... King and Smith
9. Horsemanship Extraordinary ..... by ..... Sig. Sebastian
10. Les Femmes ..... by the ..... Lawrence Brothers
11. La Trape ..... by the ..... Clive Brothers
12. Pirouette Equilibration ..... by ..... Ella Zoyara
13. Black Rope ..... by ..... J. Ward
14. Concluding with the comic Piece ..... MONS. AND MADAME DENNIS

Trick Clown ..... SIGNOR FELIX CARLO  
 Jester ..... JAMES WARD  
 Ring Master ..... R. BELLINGHAM

week at the Boston Public Garden on September 17. After completing the Boston stand, the show moved back to New York. It then took a railroad tour of the South ending with a long stand at the St. Charles Theater in New Orleans from the 19th of November until December 8. From there the show travelled by steamship to Havana. Nixon and Co. returned to New York on March 18. Gottschalk in his memoirs mentions the furor caused in Havana by the "hermosa senorita Zoyara." The exact cause of the furor isn't disclosed. On March 28, 1861 Nixon again opened at Niblo's. He then joined with his nemesis of the previous season, John G. Sloat, to form Nixon's Royal Circus and Sloat's New York Circus. Zoyara was with this show and it is interesting to note that he rode both as Ella and as Signor Zoyara. Signor Zoyara was advertised as Ella's brother recently arrived from Spain.<sup>4</sup>

The Signor included in his turn a posturing act with his new protegee "the infantile pupil, "Gemma." This is the first mention of Zoyara's protegee later known as Little Gemma. Gemma was later identified as a young lady, but given the circumstances one must wonder. Since exposed, this seems to be a most interesting way to take advantage of the situation. Upon the closing of this show Zoyara again appeared with Nixon's Royal Circus and Menagerie of Living Animals. This show opened on September 2 and played on the corner of 6th Avenue and 14th Street in New York. An old friend of Zoyara's, Eaton Stone, was also with the show. At some time during 1862 Zoyara played with Stokes National Circus. Kingsley didn't lack for work.

On October 7 Zoyara was with the Great Orion Circus at the Bowery Theater. One week later this company was combined with Madigan's troupe. On the 28th the show was called Sam Stickney's National Circus. Included in the cast were Zoyara, Signor Sebastian, Joe Pentland, Little Gemma and Mlle. Heloise (Sally Stickney). Zoyara married Sally Stickney in October of 1861 so Sam Stickney became his father-in-law. The show remained through March of 1862 using guest artists for short periods of time. Dan Rice, who had a Zoyara competitor, played with the show at the end of January. Evidently there were no hard feelings. This after all was show business. Sam Stickney even did his Courier of St. Petersburg act, something he had not performed for thirty-two years. In late April of 1862 Zoyara was again at the Palace Garden on the corner of 6th Avenue and 14th Street. This area was now called Cremo Garden. On the 21st Zoyara and Little Gemma were with Nixon's Royal



Circus where they played for three days on the corner of Fulton and DeKalb Streets.

In 1863 Zoyara opened with The Great Equiroator Circus managed by his old friend Stokes. By August 4 the show had changed its name to Zoyara's Equiroator Circus. This name change may have been to take advantage of Zoyara's name but this might have been Zoyara's first excursion into ownership.

Toward the end of 1863 Kingsley decided to try his luck in California. The population of the west was increasing at a rapid rate and people were starved for entertainment. On May 19, 1864 the Wilson & Zoyara Great Circus opened in San Francisco on a lot on Jackson Street. Featured were Ella Zoyara and his wife Sally Stickney, who used the name Eloise while performing. The show then played the hinterlands and returned to the Jackson Street lot in San Francisco with a new title, Wilson-Zoyara's & Carlos Great Circus. On November 2 Zoyara and Carlos moved to an indoor circus called the Cirque Magique at Platte Hall.

In 1865 the tenting season began in early April. A new partner had joined the show and it was now advertised as Cooke, Zoyara & Wilson's Circus. The show was advertised as consisting of four distinct shows including James Cooke's Circus from Astleys in London. This Cooke was not of the famous family and not of Astleys. In fact his name was Patrick Hoey, an Irishman, who used the name James Cooke professionally as an acrobat, contortionist, vaulter and clown. On August 2 the show returned to San Francisco as Wilson's Mastodon Champion Circus of the World. After closing in late August, this troupe packed up and sailed on the schooner *Alice* for a two year trip to the Hawaiian Islands, New Zealand and Australia. The show played for two weeks in Honolulu under the patronage of the king. From there the show went to Tahiti followed by a stop in Auckland, New Zealand. Opening in early January the show created a great furor and played to many full houses. After a month the company reluctantly departed Auckland for Australia. The building of the circus created quite a stir in Sydney when they arrived. The circus building was erected on Pitt Street in four days and was itself an event that sold tickets to the show. The show was favorably received and of Zoyara was said: "The company contains some superb riders foremost of whom is the magnificent equestrienne, Madame Zoyara, in whom grace of action and display of nerve is combined in a remarkable degree."<sup>5</sup> Evidently the charade was still in effect. Dingess reports that the show traveled through India, the Straits Settle-

## DAN RICE'S GREAT SHOW.



THE MOST NOVEL, UNIQUE AND EXTRAORDINARY EXHIBITION UPON EARTH!

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IT WILL EXHIBIT AFTERNOON AND NIGHT

AT SPARTA,

Tuesday, August 20th, 1861.

Doors open at 2 and 7 o'clock, P. M. Performance commencing one half hour after opening.

Admission 25 cents. Reserved seats 50 cents. Children to all parts of the pavilion 15 cents.

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Is not a Circus, nor a Menagerie, but a grand exposition of the wonders of nature and art, including highly trained animals and remarkable exploits of athletic power and agility, such as are without parallel in any country, and which have received the patronage and endorsement of crowded and fashionable audiences in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore,

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And calculated to gratify the taste of the intellectual, the moral and refined.

First appearance in this region of the great American humorist,

DAN RICE,

WHO IS NOT DEAD.

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Will appear at each performance of the great show, and amuse the public as in days of yore, with his unrivalled powers of wit, humor, sarcasm and original oratory.

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Mons. Alexander Zanzfretze, the Creole Blon-in, on the Gord's Tende.

The performing bear Garabaldi, in the Zoological, and Homological comedy of

BEAR AND SENTINEL!

Frank H. Russton, the Champion Horseman, in Equestrian splendors.

M'LE ELLA ZOYARA,

The embodiment of youth, beauty, grace, daring and artistic skill, will appear in her wondrous scene of Equitation, which has enchanted the most fashionable audiences of Europe, and placed her at the very head of her profession. During her European career she was the recipient of the highest compliments and numerous costly presents from crowned heads and the nobility, while in America, wherever she has appeared she has excited a degree of enthusiasm absolutely without parallel.

An Ella Zoyara was listed in this Dan Rice 1861 newspaper ad in Michigan. Author's collection.

ment, China, Japan and the Philippines.

In late 1867 the show returned to America. There does seem to be some confu-

sion on dates here for Zoyara's obituary reports that he returned from his Asian tour in July of 1869.

In spite of the fact that his marriage to Sally Stickney produced three children, it was an unhappy marriage. Upon his return from his Australian-Asian tour his marriage to Sally was dissolved and he later remarried a younger woman. This union produced one child.

For the most part he cast off his female impersonation upon his return to the states. He rode as a male, but for special occasions would revive his female deception. This was always well advertised and drew full houses. One eye witness account of such a date recalled: "I was going to speak of the last time I saw him as Zoyara. It was at his benefit and he was the ringmaster. Many years had elapsed since he wore the female garb. But when Zoyara bounded into the ring, the transformation was complete. No one would have recognized the smug ring-master of a few moments before. She went through the regulation feats with daring grace, and finally came to the hoops. She cleared all but one, which an awkward super persisted in holding at an impossible angle. Three times she passed it, and each time the super became more uneasy and awkward. Finally Zoyara attempted it but the super had lost his head. He succeeded in catching Zoyara's foot with the hoop and she was dragged from the horse and hurled with much force to the ground, here her forehead struck against one of the wooden stools used for standing on.

"There was a roar of dismay from the audience, and then a storm of hisses leveled at the unhappy super. Zoyara rose, picked up the hoop, gracefully presented it to the super, smiled, kissed her hand to the audience, bounded after her horse, mounted, and finished the act successfully. The whole thing was so neatly done, and Kingsley's command of his temper was so great, that the audience fairly rose at him.

"I admired his self control extremely; for I had seen him drilling his troupe once when there was no audience present. The vigor of his profanity then convinced me that had such been the case at this time he would have laid out the super with the stool."<sup>6</sup>

Zoyara's temper tantrums were legendary and were reported by a number of observers. After all he was a star and obviously much spoiled by his mentor.

Dates for shows featuring Zoyara are scarce after his return from his Far East tour. It is assumed that he played the Pacific slope at this time for dates from this area are unreliable and scanty. In May of 1871 appeared with The Great San Francisco Circus & Roman Hippodrome. In



August the New York Mammoth Circus opened with Zoyara as a rider and Kingsley listed as one of the proprietors along with a Mr. Thompson. He appears again with the John Wilson and Yankee Robinson show, Wilson's Grand Amphitheater & Parisian Circus, which ran from early February until the end of May. In 1874 he again was associated with Wilson as the equestrian director for the Palace Amphitheater & Grand Circus. This show also had Kingsley in his first stint as a clown. By now he was thirty-four years old and certainly his skills as a rider had diminished. It can safely be said that upon his return from his Australian-Asian tour Kingsley had not only dropped the facade of a female, but had moved into horse training and circus managing.

In 1876 Kingsley, John Wilson and Mr. Thompson became partners and decided to again visit Australia and the east. The show was called John Wilson's San Francisco Palace Circus. It inaugurated its tour in the Queensland city of Rockhampton to the discharge of cannon from the ship that had carried it from the United States.<sup>7</sup> From Australia the circus then moved to the east. The circus had just opened a season in India when Kingsley came down with smallpox, making only two or three appearances before contracting the disease. He was taken to the European General Hospital in Bombay. Harry Corbin and a Mr. Tapp of the circus company nursed Kingsley. He passed

away on April 3, 1879. The entire circus troupe followed his remains when he was buried in Sewree. No performance was held that evening out of respect.<sup>8</sup>

So the saga of Ella Zoyara drew to a close. He died still a fairly young man—thirty-nine. He left a young widow and child. He certainly packed a great deal into his life. One wonders just what was in the mind of young Sammy when he apprenticed to Spencer Q. Stokes. He certainly couldn't have imagined what was to happen to him in the next thirty-two years. One would also think that Stokes himself could not have realized just how far his creation would go. While others had donned the female garb and performed as the opposite sex, none did so for so long and with such skill. Because of the slowness with which news traveled, Kingsley was able to stay ahead of the news that he was in fact a male. His true sex was quickly found out when he played New York, but this large city would have access to news relatively quickly. The hinterlands did not have that access and Kingsley took advantage of the situation. He rode as a woman for as long as he could. He managed to perform successfully as Ella in his first Australian tour, but seemed to give it up on his return to the States. How would he stand up to some of the men riders of the day? Perhaps not too well and that might have been the reason for his continued appearance as Ella. Better to be a great woman rider than a mediocre male rider. It was not until some time after 1867 that he no

longer rode as a female. Even after giving up the charade it is said that he continued to do needle work and would sit in his dressing tent wearing a female's wrapper.

Actor is not a term often heard in the modern circus. The old timers referred to performers as actors. If ever anyone in the circus world deserved that title it was S. O. Kingsley aka Ella Zoyara, the man-maiden. He was certainly the greatest.

I would like to thank several individuals who helped me gather the data for the article. Stuart Thayer's *Annals* are a marvelous source of information, and Thayer was most generous in sharing his research. Fred Dahlinger at the Circus World Museum provided much of the material used in the article. Fred Pfening III loaned *Clipper* microfilms. George Speaight, noted English circus historian, shared information on Kingsley in Europe as did Mark St. Leon and Geoff Greaves on Kingsley in Australia.

#### Footnotes

1. John Dingess unpublished manuscript, Hertzberg Circus Collection, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.
2. *New York Clipper*, March 21, 1908, "Chats With An Old Circus Man," Will S. Heck interview with Richard Hemmings.
3. *New York Clipper*, February 18, 1860.
4. Circus advertisement for Nixon and Sloat's Circus, March 28, 1861.
5. *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 6, 1866.
6. Circus World Museum Box 5. Equestriennes, No ID.
7. Geoff Greaves letter of February 8, 1993.
8. *New York Clipper*, May 17, 1879. p.58. Obituary for S. O. Kingsley.

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# THE 1993 CHS CONVENTION

In recent years, the Circus Historical Society conventions have featured a mix of past and present circuses, a dose of circusiana, and just enough off-beat events to keep things interesting. This year's May 12-15 meeting in Nashville was no exception.

The festivities began on Wednesday night, May 12, with an informal cocktail party and videos of historic circuses. The official program got underway the next morning with opening remarks by convention chairman and CHS President John Polacsek. He was followed by Secretary-Treasurer Dale Haynes who reported on the organization's healthy finances.

Fred Dahlinger, the society's Vice-President and director of the Circus World Museum's Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center, then outlined activities in the library, particularly the massive building remodeling which is currently underway, and gave an overview of the CWM's season. Steve Gosard, Curator of Special Collection at Illinois State University, followed. He reported on that institution's extensive circus holdings and his efforts to organize it. He also described the recently acquired Frank Ball collection.

Jim Sherraden, manager of Hatch Show Print, displays a wood block used to create the Mollie Bailey-Bailey Bros. poster on right in the 1930s. All photos by Fred D. Pfening Jr.

Sarah Blackstone concluded the session with a paper on the "Treatment of American Indians on Wild West Shows," in which she detailed the way Native Americans were recruited and treated on shows such as those of Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill.

After lunch the conventioners attended an open house at Egyptian Hall, a magic museum and library housed in the home of David Price Sr. The Prices, senior, junior and their wives, showed the group many rare posters, letters, and other types of memorabilia from this premier collection. Many of the attendees marveled at the range of lithograph companies represented in the posters. With no events scheduled that evening, the members scattered to the four winds for dinner.

The next morning the convention goes toured Hatch Show Print which in past years had done a great deal of circus, minstrel, and under-canvas dramatic show wood block posters. The walls of the establishment were covered with examples of the company's product along with numerous large wood block cuts including two used by Ray Marsh Brydon's 1935

Dan Rice Circus. Jim Sherraden, manager of the shop, explained how wood block printing was executed. While the company had been at its present location only fifteen months, the facility had the feel of a print shop from decades past. A special souvenir CHS wood block poster was distributed to each member to commemorate the visit which was one of the highlights of the convention.

That afternoon the convention-goers boarded the *Music City*, a paddle wheel vessel, for a leisurely trip on the Cumberland River. The two and a half hour trip



Dave Price Sr., and Dave Price Jr. at the senior Price's Egyptian Hall museum and library in Nashville. The Prices graciously allowed the CHS to view this magnificent collection of magic material.

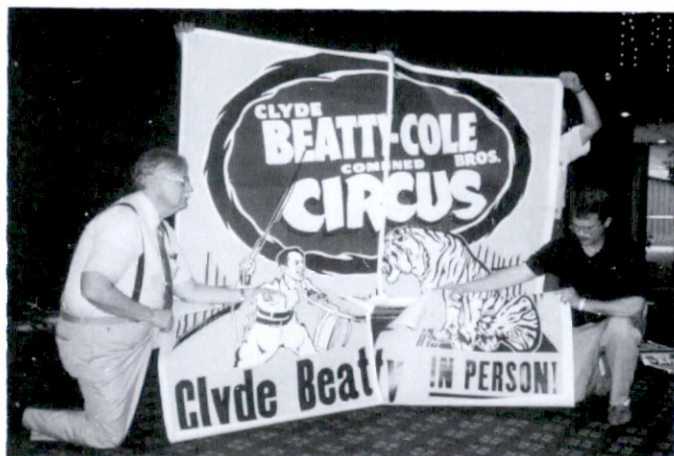
gave members ample time to cut jackpots, enjoy the scenery, and relax.

That evening the group attended the blue unit of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in the Nashville Memorial Auditorium which was within

Howard Tibbals displays a rare Spalding and Rogers lithograph from the early 1850s during his presentation to the society.







Dave Price, left, and Steve Gossard unfurl a Beatty-Cole nine sheet, donated by Price, at the auction.

walking distance of the hotel. This unit was re-routined late last year and many members had their first opportunity to see it since flying trapeze acts had been added and the rock and roll singers had been dropped.

Another historical session was held the next morning. Stuart Thayer read a paper on the early circus economics which detailed the finances of shows before the Civil War. Fred Dahlinger followed with a slide presentation and commentary on a group of Ringling Bros. Circus photos from the wagon show and early rail years recently acquired by the Circus World Museum.

Howard Tibbals then treated the audience to a selection of rare lithographs from his collection. Included were numerous Buffalo Bill posters, some by European printers, and a sampling from

19th and early 20th century circuses such as Spalding and Rogers, Adam Forepaugh, Campbell Bros., and Sig Sautelle & Welsh Bros. Tibbals discussed how he had built his fabulous collection, often noting where he had acquired certain pieces. Needless to say, his presentation was well received.

After lunch the annual CHS circusiana auction was held. All the material was donated by members, including a number of posters from the infamous Ted Deppish collection. Deppish, a Canton, Ohio circus fan, compulsively stamped his name all over the fronts of his lithos from the 1930s and 1940s, thereby considerably diminishing their value. Other items on the block included books, programs, contracts, and letterheads. Spirited bidding, particularly on some of the posters and on two Ringling-Barnum performer contracts from the 1940s, fetched nearly \$3000, all of which will be used in publishing the *Bandwagon*.

The banquet that evening was a won-



Fred D. Pfening Jr., Tim Holst, Fred Dahlinger, and John Polacsek (l. to r.) after the closing banquet.

derful finale to a wonderful four days. Guest speaker Tim Holst, Vice-President for Production and Talent for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, enthralled the crowd with his experiences in scouting and bringing acts from far off lands to the Greatest Show on Earth. He noted the decline of circus schools in former communist countries and its effect on world circus. Holst explained how the Ringling show planned to meet this challenge. After his remarks he answered questions from the audience and passed out first day covers of the new circus stamps on a special envelope designed for Ringling-Barnum. Like the company he works for, Holst gave more than was advertised and his superb presentation was a fitting conclusion to the delightful sojourn of circus historians in the music city. Fred D. Pfening Jr.

## ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS

VOLUME III 1848 - 1860

In this, the latest (and last) of our series of books on the ante-bellum circus are chronicled the leaders of the institution: Rufus Welch, Spalding & Rogers, E. F. & J. Mabie, James Raymond and the Sands group of impresarios. In addition, such phenomena as Franconi's Hippodrome, Barnum's Caravan, and the Floating Palace are described. Dan Rice's first shows are here, as are those of Joe Pentland, H. C. Lee, and Richard Risley. It was in this period that the circus reached the Pacific Coast and fourteen titles are documented. The railroad circus in its infancy (nine shows) is included.

The book has a 136 page narrative section, 147 pages of appendix (rosters and routes) and an 18 page index with over 1,000 names. \$30 postpaid. Available from the author:

Stuart Thayer  
430 17th Avenue East  
Seattle, WA 98112



**L**emen Brothers' Colossal Shows began the season of 1892 in their home town of Argentine, Kansas, on April 30. There was no question in the opinion of the *Argentine Republic* but what "Lemen Bros. will have the finest show on the road this summer, and it will be a good advertisement for Argentine." The *Republic* predicted that: "Next Saturday will see the largest crowd ever assembled under canvas in this city, at the initial performance. The brothers are gentlemen, and deserve well of the citizens of Argentine."

The editors crystal ball was sharp and clear and the paper could report, following circus day, that: "On last Saturday night the Lemen Bros. show had the largest crowd ever assembled in Argentine."

The first news of the coming season was an ad in the *Republic* on April 18. A second insertion appeared on the 21st. Featured was Lemen Brothers new elephant which, when advertised, had not yet arrived from New York. The ad announced, "A Big Feature in a Big Show! Just Found! Just Added! RAJAH!"

"The Biggest Brute Breathes! The Biggest Born of Brutes! The Biggest Brute Alive! The Biggest Feature Yet! Secured at a cost of over \$25,000. A Towering Giant among his fellows. The Very Lord of Beasts. Taller! Longer! Weighs More! Costs More than any elephant ever captured alive or brought from his native jungle! RAJAH is on exhibition at all times in the Big Tent. No extra charge. one ticket admits to all the advertised shows."

The advertisement boasted of "200 Wild Beasts in the Enormous Menageries." It was admittedly "the most costly and colossal collection of rare animals and birds in the universe. Lofty headed Giraffes, Polar Bears, Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, Mammoth Mandrills, Ostriches, Sea Lions, Huge Boa Constrictor, Kangaroos, Tigers, Leopards, Bears, and an aviary composed of nearly all the rare and beautiful birds of the whole world. 100 trained animals."

Where the money came from was not explained, but the ad reported: "\$1,000,000 Invested in this Great Show, Daily Expenses \$2,500, Rain of Shine."

The only performers mentioned directly were the Corliss Sisters, aerialists, and the Tokyo

## THE ONLY TRIPLE-HORNED UNICORN BACKED by UNLIMITED MILLIONS

Chapter 9, Part Three  
By Orin Copple King

Copyright © 1990 Orin Copple King

Troupe of Japanese Jugglers and 15 Acting Clowns.

The ad claimed: "Four Trained Elephants, \$50,000 Stud Performing Horses, Canine Circus." Among the "200 Actors" in the "Colossal 3 Ring Circus" were "Bicycle and Skatorial Achievements, ten times the largest and best circus ever exhibited."

All sorts of races were promised, including "Frontier Races by Sioux Indians and Ponies on the Magnificent Paris Hippodrome." One of the most astonishing features was "Liberated Lions Harnessed to Chariots."

In the "Gold Gleaming "Gorgeous Parade" one could see not only Lalla Rookh's departure from Delhi, but also Cleopatra journeying to meet Marc Anthony.

The price of admission was not given but at the top of the ad it was clearly stated that: "It has gained The glorious word

Rajah being unloaded from his railroad car. Pfening Archives.

of popular applause' its worth is warrant for its welcome.' The fame-crowned LEMEN BROS. COLOSSAL SHOWS."

The most interesting event of the season opener was the statement in the *Republic* that, "It took six hours by the clock last Sunday night to load Lemen Bros. big elephant 'Rajah' on his car."

In nearly every town in which the show exhibited at least one paper carried the following handout which appeared in the April 30 Atchison

*Patriot* heralding the performances of May 10: "The Greatest of All.

"As circus day approaches interest in the coming exhibition of the great Lemen Bros.' shows, which will exhibit here May 10, increases and the excitement in young and old American circles expands. The reports of the big show's success this year has been so general, and the leading features have produced so great a sensation elsewhere, that public interest has been aroused to a greater extent than usual and the big show is certain to coin money. It must always be a source of satisfaction to an audience when it feels it is getting an equivalent for its money, but when the features both in the menagerie and ring, are out of the established 'rut' of the average circus and develops into a series of surprising novelties, any one of which would constitute a 'feature' strong enough to draw the public, an audience must become enthusiastic in its pleasures. This seems to be the effect wherever the Lemen Bros. have been this season, and that, no doubt, will be the effect here. Among the new features the most prominent will be Rajah, the largest elephant that walks the earth. The free exhibition on the show grounds after the parade is said to be the best ever given. We expect to see an enormous crowd on May 10."

On May 7, the *Patriot* ran the following news story: "John Freeney, the lion tamer with Lemen Bros.' circus, which will be exhibited in Atchison May 10, was seriously injured in Kansas City yesterday. When Freeney entered the cage of five young lions to give an exhibition he took nothing with him but a black snake whip. Suddenly without any warning the largest beast sprang upon the man, knocking him down and then catching his hand in his formidable jaws, completely tore off the index finger and badly mutilating the other fingers





and wrist. It also tore his shoulders, face and head in a terrible manner. Had it not been for prompt assistance the man would have been torn limb from limb by the infuriated beast, and it was only with the greatest difficulty he was rescued."

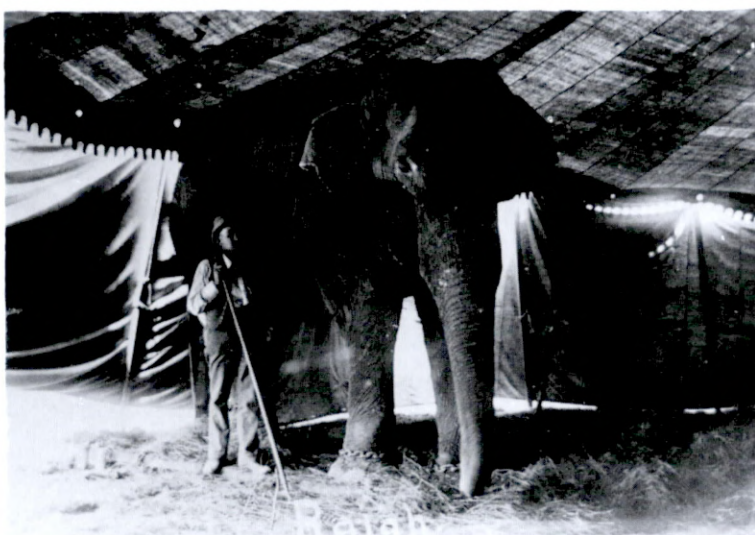
The hazards of exhibiting the "Biggest Brute that Breathes" were recounted in a story in the May 14 *Patriot*: "The car containing Rajah, Lemen Bros.' big elephant, jumped the track at Lansing yesterday and was ditched. The jar frightened old Rajah, and when he was released he made a rush for the timber and there gave vent to his

fury at being so roughly treated. The beast tore up several trees and his trumpeting could be heard for a mile. The keeper tried to get near the elephant, but the beast pulled up a good sized tree with his trunk and hurled it toward the man, somewhat to the keeper's discouragement. After a time the elephant became quiet and with the aid of a generous supply of peanuts he was coaxed back to the car and held in subjection until the wreck was cleared. The train was delayed so long that it was impossible to show in Leavenworth, and the company came to Atchison."

No mention was made of how the show fared in Atchison.

Valley Falls was scheduled for May 11. The *New Era* ran the following handout on April 30: "The Old Reliable Lemen Bros. Shows.

"Many of our older readers will recall the name of the above well-known establishment, that exhibits in our city May 11th, with pleasure. With many of them it brings vividly to mind the first elephant they ever saw. There is a whole sermon in the career of this show. It proves that when any concern becomes known as an honestly conducted one and fulfills its promises to the public, that it succeeds, and the business flourishes and becomes a fixture to be handed down from generation to generation. It proves also the truth of the old proverb that 'Honesty is the best policy.' The career of the Lemen Bros. show from 1880 to the present time has been one of continuous success. And the proprietors deserve it. They have always given the public the worth of their money. In these days of humbug it is really refreshing to be able to speak in terms of praise of an amusement enterprise. This year the managers promise us a new surprise, in the shape of the largest elephant on earth. It is Rajah, and to-day stands



Rajah in the Lemen Bros. Circus menagerie. Pfening Archives.

two inches taller than Jumbo. It is the largest creature that breathes the breath of life. This will be indeed a great curiosity. The whole show is said to be exceptionally good, and we will miss our guess if their tents are not packed on the day of exhibition. As this will be the only big show to visit this section this year, we advise all our readers to be sure and see it."

This handout was used over and over in Kansas. The May 14 *New Era* disagreed concerning the quality of the exhibitions and reported that: "The Lemen Bros. Big Shows have been here, and their tents full of people last Wednesday afternoon; not so many at night. The parade was poor. The circus was poor. Some of the acrobatic performances were good. Rajah is a monstrous big elephant."

On the day that Ringling Brothers was being washed out of Topeka on May 12 another downpour 26 miles to the south was forcing Lemen Brothers to cancel their Burlingame date. The *Osage County Chronicle*, Burlingame, reported the following Thursday that, "The Lemen Brothers circus was unable to pitch tents here on account of the heavy rain. They left for Alma in the afternoon and talked of coming here later. What we could see of them they appeared to be good square business men. If they return we hope they will be liberally patronized."

Friday the 13th at Alma was just another wet and muddy day in May. The *Alma Signal* reported a slim attendance. Had the weather been favorable there would doubtless have been a big turnout. The show was pronounced good by those in attendance. There was a big spread of canvas, a fair showing of animals and the performers were first class. Rajah was immense and Albert was no slouch in his line. He materially assisted

the teams and men in moving the wagons through the mud. He would push the cages by throwing his weight against them and he went at it in a way that no injury resulted as might be expected."

In another story the *Signal* recounted a small-time robbery. "A colored porter in the employ of Lemen brother's show skipped out for Kansas City with twenty silver dollars of the property of the company on the day of the show. He tried the safe but failed to accomplish his purpose of securing the funds inside. Deputy Marshal Welfelt was put on the

trail and learned that he had presented four silver dollars in payment for a ticket to Kansas City. A telegram was sent to Chief Spears to arrest the delinquent on his arrival at Kansas City."

The editor of the *Alma Enterprise* was apparently creditor to a number of people who attended the circus and their squandering of family fortunes rankled him no end: "Floods or mud, or black cats or hard times, or anything above or beneath or elsewhere, does not stop people from going to a circus. Of course the children must go, and the old folks have to go along to take care of them. Circuses are all right, but when people who are so hard up that they cannot pay their honest debts long past due, will go and spend money which does not really belong to them, it looks like there should be another prohibition law enacted."

On the way out of Alma, according to the *Signal*, "The car containing the two elephants—Rajah and Albert—was ditched at the Rock Island crossing. Albert was made to get out and walk to Pavilion (location unknown). The delay on account of the accident prevented a parade by the company at Manhattan on Saturday but the two regular performances were given in the afternoon and evening."

The *Marshall County Democrat*, reviewing circus day, May 16, reported that, "Lemen Bros. circus played the town [Marysville] Monday to a good audience in the afternoon, and a fair audience in the evening. Rajah was there, just as advertised. So far as we have learned there was no crooked work going on, neither was there the usual compliment of fights and broils. One of the most interesting sights of the show was to see an elephant push the wagons up on to the cars after the performance was over."

The *Democrat* also noted that, "Lemen Bros.' circus train got caught at Hanover



by a washout and failed to get through to Fairbury [Nebraska] Tuesday, in time for a performance."

The July 14 Phillipsburg *Herald* carried the following: "A wind and rainstorm struck Clarksville, Missouri, just as Lemen Bros.' circus opened their night performance, and levelled their mammoth tents in an instant. Several ladies and children were injured slightly, and the boss canvas man was very seriously injured by a falling center pole."

Lemen Brothers' Colossal Shows returned to Kansas in August for several dates including Osage Mission, August 24; Chanute, August 26; and Chetopah, August 27. Osage Mission disappeared from the Kansas map in 1895 when the name was changed to St. Paul.

The show created no great excitement in Osage Mission. After the show the only report on circus day was two short sentences in the *Osage Mission Journal*: "The circus has come and gone. One thing for Lemen, Rajah was a reality."

Publicity for the exhibitions at Chanute centered on Rajah. The *Blade* reported that: "Rajah is bigger than Jumbo."

"Rajah is the largest elephant that walks the earth. He is bigger than Jumbo. He will pay us a visit on Friday, August 26."

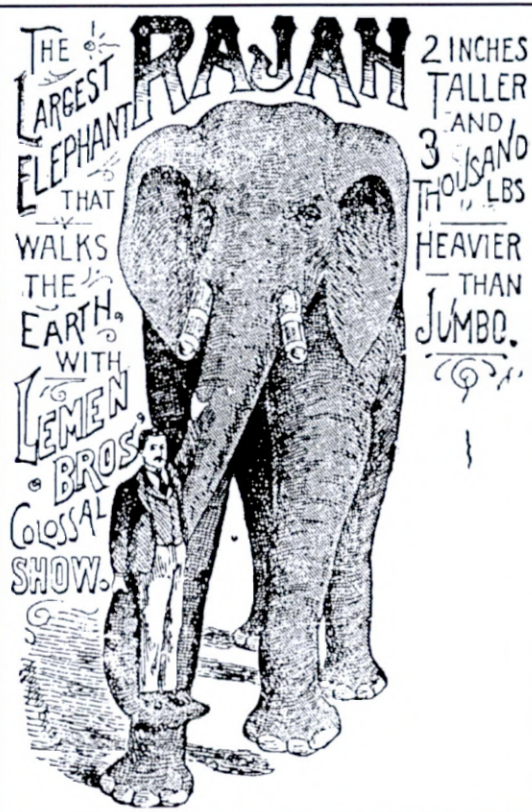
"Rajah is two inches taller and weighs two tons more than his famous brother Jumbo."

"Rajah was imported from India. He was captured near Rangoon in the Bay of Bengal. He is 11 feet 11 inches high and weighs 13,000 pounds. He will be in Chanute Friday, August 26."

After the exhibitions the *Blade* made no mention of Lemen Brothers.

A handout appeared in the August 27 Chetopa *Democrat* concerning colossal Rajah, "Bigger Than Jumbo." It was the same story that was quoted in conjunction with the report on Ringling Brothers' elephant Rajah in the May 23 *Wichita Daily Beacon*: "Rijah or Rajah, the stories are identical. Possibly Ringlings wanted to purchase the animal, or did make the deal, only to return Rijah to Lemen Brothers for some unknown reason. It is a reasonable assumption in view of Rajah's later meanness that the Ringlings did not wish to carry such a dangerous animal."

The *Democrat* reported that: "The old town was crowded last Saturday all day. People came in carriages, in wagons, in ox teams, on horseback and on foot from all directions. And they were all kinds of people, too. They came with the show



Lemen Bros. used this illustration of Rajah in its newspaper ads and heralds. Pfening Archives.

and to see the show. While in the city they took occasion to call upon our merchants, and carried home large quantities of goods. It really reminded our people of the boom days of Chetopa."

In another column the *Democrat* claimed that: "The show was fully as good as expected. The menagerie did not amount to much, but the circus was fair. Of course we missed 'the best part of the whole show,' the concert. The attendance was good both afternoon and evening, and Lemen Bros. will have no cause to say that Chetopa is a poor show town."

Other Kansas dates and where the show wintered have not yet been discovered, but in 1893 the show returned to Kansas bigger and better than ever.

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The World's Fair Aggregation, Congress of Wonders, and Combined Shows opened its first and only season in White Cloud, Kansas on May 21, 1892. The show was organized at White Cloud by Joseph White, sole owner; W. S. Wheeler, manager; and F. W. George, agent. Most of the non-performing personnel were citizens of White Cloud.

An ad in the White Cloud *Globe* announced the initial exhibition: "GALA DAY! GALA DAY! Grand Holiday for the multitude, Mark well the day and date,

The coming of the Great WORLD'S FAIR AGGREGATION, CONGRESS OF WONDERS AND COMBINED SHOWS, This Mammoth organization will spread its white tents at White Cloud, Saturday, May 21st, and give two grand performances, afternoon and evening, rain or shine.

"Seeing is believing. All who visit this show will receive their money's worth, as it is the only Big Show of New Features coming to White Cloud this year."

"All of our Grand Free exhibition will take place on the show lot each day at 12:30 sharp, and will be worth coming miles to see. You will behold wonders upon wonders, bewildering and startling, that will hold you spellbound with admiration. The startling sights will be Free and will take place at 12:30 rain or shine."

"A SIDE SHOW OF WONDERS, THE ONLY LIVING MERMAID. The following telegram from the owner of the side show privilege explains itself: 'Received at 4:48 p.m. May 7, 1892, Fort Scott, Kansas. W. S. Wheeler, White Cloud, Kansas. Just received pair of Blood Sucking Vampires alive.' S. P. Bowman. WHITE CLOUD, MAY 21."

"Joseph White, Sole Owner. W. S. Wheeler, Manager. F. W. George, Agent. Cheap Rates On All Rail Roads."

The *Globe* gave the opening exhibition good coverage. In spite of chilly, threatening weather, the show drew large audiences both afternoon and evening.

"Features that deserve special mention," in the opinion of the *Globe*, "were the work of the Jennier family, the father and children, George and Maude. Their work alone is worth the price of admission. The elder Jennier in his barrel and globe acts certainly is the equal of any man in the profession. The children in the trapeze captured the multitude. The work of Signor Harris on the horizontal bar, Laredo, the human snake, Keetch in lofty tumbling and swing perch, was of a high order and ranks them with the leaders in this branch of the art. Mrs. Bowman's troupe of educated dogs is a strong feature of the show. The ladder of swords, slack wire, juggling, tumbling and many other features are fully up to the standard. The funny clowns, Wheeler and Devier, kept the amusement part of the programme at par with the other features. Mr. Wheeler is a pupil of the celebrated Dan Rice and rivals that great clown when he was in his prime as a funmaker."

"The concert was refined and pleasing, introducing songs, dances, and funny sketches that were gems for amusement."

"Prof. Bowman's museum of wonders and side show is truly one of the best of its kind. It seems impossible to show so much for so little money. There is not a feature in the show that is not alone



worth the price of admission. The den of snakes, the transparent Turk, the vampires, the living mermaid, the lady potter, poisonous reptiles, funny monkeys, Punch and Judy, and the man of magic were all there and the people were pleased.

"The management is made up of gentlemen, who scheme to please. No games of chance, sure thing men or rowdyism of any kind is permitted on or near the show grounds. The treatment of patrons in every department is courteous and gentlemanly. The free exhibition was all that is advertised and is worth going miles to see.

"Taking it all and all, it is a grand show, worth the money it costs to see it, free from anything objectionable or immoral and entirely deserving of a full measure of success.

"Let the Goddess of prosperity guard its destiny and guide its footsteps is the wish of its multitude of friends in White Cloud."

Among the residents of White Cloud on the show was Rufus Kelley, bookkeeper, Newt Lear, Art Barber, Theo. Taylor, Charlie Jones, Abe Beeler and Dave Confer.

The people of White Cloud apparently could not get enough of a good thing for a group attended the exhibitions at Highland on Monday, May 23, and a "wagon load" caught the show at Severance on the 24th.

The advance crew, which took the road on May 12, experienced a problem at Highland which was quite common in rural Kansas, but was seldom mentioned in the press. Local "Blue Laws" required the closing of all businesses on Sunday with the result that the advance crew could get neither food nor shelter.

"The butcher was finally induced to open his shop and sell them some meat," according to the *Globe*, "for which act of kindness he was promptly arrested on Monday for violating the Sunday law." The men were forced to sleep under "a charitable tree," for the only hotel refused to register them on Sunday.

The Highland *Vidette* carried a two-column ad illustrated with a woman whose lower limbs were brazenly exposed as she pushed a wheel-barrow over a tight wire. The only comment from the *Vidette* following circus day was, "The show on Monday night was very good for a twenty-five cent show. While there was no ring performance some of the acting was excellent." "No ring performance" referred to the absence of horses.

The Severance *Weekly News* also carried a two-column ad, but without an illustration. The date given in the ad was March 24, instead of May 24, and was undoubtedly an embarrassment to the editor.

The *News* also ran a series of "locals" in the news columns.

"U. S. Wheeler will make you laugh. He is a funny clown.

"Plenty of performing dogs and monkeys with the great show.

"Everybody is going to see the greatest 25-cent show on earth May 24."

The *News* failed to report if "Everybody," or anybody, attended the show.

The residents of Whiting faced a real

"A heavy rain about 4 o'clock made the tents and grounds very wet," the Goffs *Advance* reported, "and the company gave a varied entertainment in the old school house in the evening which was well attended."

The rain and mud on the ten mile hike from Goffs to Soldier was so severe that it was necessary to ship part of the aggregation by rail involving a six hour wait at Circleville. The matinee was lost but a

performance was managed in the evening. The *Soldier Clipper* thought "The circus was better than its outside appearance would indicate."

All the newspaper advertising for the exhibitions at Havensville on June 1, consisted of two short statements in the *Torchlight*: "4 Clowns with the big show.

"The big 25 cent show will be here on June 1."

Havensville was the first date without a traditional advertisement.

The Westmoreland *Recorder*, speaking of the exhibitions billed for Saturday, June 4, carried an interesting story on June 2: "There will be a circus in town, Saturday. Its size can be judged from the fact that its manager who called to get us to advertise his concern could not afford to pay \$3.00 for a half column advertisement inserted once. He then offered us five 25-cent tickets for ten lines of local, but when informed that we would publish the same for our regular price of fifty cents, could not afford to pay, hence the locals do not appear and we have not tickets for the show."

On June 9 the *Recorder* stated that, "The show, Saturday, was fairly good for a small affair. There was not a large crowd in town, but the citizens turned out so well that the managers were well pleased with their visit to this place."

At Westmoreland the boss canvasman was replaced by Dave Confer.

Herington saw the Great World's Fair on June 20. The *Times* reported: "The Curious.

"The great congress of exaggeration which was advertised for Herington put in an appearance Sunday followed by two small boys and a dog, and all that afternoon and the next day till noon the wonderment was as to 'when will the show be in.'

"Monday noon came and found a fair sized crowd in town ready to look at the parade. But when the band had played the people were informed by the 'all around man,' that they had saved the expense of a gorgeous parade and had add-

**COMING!**

**COMING!**

The Great World's Fair Aggregation, Congress of Wonders will Exhibit at

**LEONARDVILLE WED. JUNE 8th.**

**Afternoon and evening.**

**Doors open 1 and 7.**

**Performance one hour later.**

**Rain or shine.**

The great free show will take place on the show lot at 12:30 noon on day of exhibition. Don't miss it. It will keep you spell-bound with wonder. Bring the children for it is free.

**4**

**CLOWNS**

**4**

**30 STAR PERFORMERS 30**

Ad in the Leonardville *Monitor* of June 2, 1892. Kansas State Historical Society.

dilemma. The Great World's Fair Aggregation was billed for May 27, at Whiting. Eleven miles to the northeast on May 28, Cook & Whitby was billed for Horton. Seventeen miles to the southwest Ringling was scheduled to exhibit on May 30, at Holton. The only reasonable solution was to enjoy them all.

After the show had come and gone, the Whiting *News* reported that, "The Show of the Great World's Fair was well patronized considering that there was to be one at Horton on Saturday and one in Holton, Monday. The free show was as advertised, given before each performance, and the side show contained many curiosities. We found them as business men, square and prompt in their dealings with us. The usual rough crowd was conspicuous by its absence."

May 30, Memorial Day, was always a difficult day for traveling shows. At Goffs (present day Goff) the Great World's Fair delayed its matinee until three o'clock so as not to conflict with the town's solemn remembrance of the fallen comrades of the Civil War.



ed that amount to the attractions inside. Of course that 'took' and the large canvas was soon filled. And notwithstanding the fact that they had no horses and consequently no riding, the show was a fair one for the money. The tumbling was good; the acrobatic performances were also good and the dog show was the best of all with perhaps the bare exception of the minstrel show which followed the main part of the performances.

"One thing may be said in their favor; there was no swindlers connected with the show; no games of chance and no changing of twenty dollar bills, just to give you back a two dollar bill in place of the twenty."

The *Herington Signal* thought: "It stood up pretty well under its imposing name although it was not a very large affair. The company was all civilized and gave a fair entertainment on a small scale. There were no horses, but the performers tied themselves in knots, tossed each other around, swung on the poles and ropes and juggled with knives and balls the same as the members of a big show company."

The show ran no traditional advertising for Cottonwood Falls on June 25, nor Toronto on July 2, relying on one or two liners in the news columns to spread the word.

One of the one-liners in the *Toronto Republican* of July 2, stated, "Thirty star performers with Old Dan Rice's Circus, July 2."

W. S. Wheeler, the clown, known more widely as U. S. Wheeler, exploited his relationship with Dan Rice to the fullest extent possible, and as manager of the Great World's Fair Aggregation made an effort to link the show to Dan Rice.

Erie, Kansas, in 1892, had two newspapers, both of which ran nickel and dime ads in the news columns for "Dan Rice's Great World's Fair and Combination Shows," which played the village on Wednesday, July 6. Neither paper ran display ads.

The *Erie Republican Record* on July 1, carried the following: "The biggest 25¢ show on earth at Erie, July 6."

"Bring the children to see the great free exhibition at 12:30 noon. Erie, July 6."

"Thirty star performers with Dan Rice's old time show, Erie, July 6, tickets 25¢."

"Don't miss Dan Rice's old time shows. Erie, July 6, tickets 25¢."

"The best performing dogs in the world are with World's Fair Shows, Erie, July 6."

"Four fancy clowns, more tumblers, more lady performers with the World's Fair Show than all others combined. Erie, July 6, tickets 25¢."

The *Erie Sentinel*, which also published

on July 1, advertised: "The Great World's Fair combine show will be at Erie July 6th. Tickets 25 cents."

"The only big show that will be in Erie this year, is the old time Dan Rice's, July 6th."

"Grand free show will take place on the show lot 12:30 noon, July 6th. "Don't fail to bring the children to see the Grand Free Exhibition that will take place on the show lot at 12:30 noon, July 6th."

"By a pool of managers this will be the only big show in Erie this year, don't miss seeing it, July 6th."

## Coming! Coming! The Great Worlds Fair

Aggregation Congress of Wonders and  
Combined Shows will Exhibit at  
**Herington, June, 20, 1892.**

Afternoon and Evening doors open  
at 1 and 7 o'clock, Performance 1 hour  
later.

## Grand Free Exhibition

Will take place on the Show Lot at 12:30  
noon on the day of the Exhibition, which is  
worth Miles to come and see, for it is Grand  
and Startling and will keep you Spell Bound  
with Wonder.

## 30 Star Performers,

## 4 CLOWNS 4

## \$5,000 A Day Circus.

25 Cent ticket admits to all advertised shows.

Herington, Monday June 20. Rain or  
Shine. Reduced Rates on all Railroads.

World's Fair ad used in the *Herington Signal* on June 20, 1892. Kansas State Historical Society.

"Dan Rice the oldest showman in the United States, will be with the biggest 25 cent show on earth, Erie, July 6th. [Author's italics]"

"More fun, more laughable acts, more funny clowns, than all other shows combined, Erie, July 6th. Tickets 25 cents."

"Thirty star performers, \$5,000 dog circus, four funny clowns, Japo, the lady's pet, are all with the big show, Erie, July 6th. Tickets 25 cents."

"More male and female performers, the best trained dogs and monkeys, than any other traveling in one line, will exhibit at Erie, July 6th. Tickets 25 cents."

Apparently the editor of the *Record* did not attend the show for he reported that,

"A tented show was in Wednesday afternoon and evening. Fair crowds were in attendance and we learn that the performance consisted of acrobatic and trapeze performances, etc., was fairly good."

The *Sentinel* was a little more informative: "The dog and monkey show minus the dogs and monkeys was fairly attended. A few attenuated jokes with whiskers and a very good trapeze performer was all there was of the 'greatest show on earth.'"

Neither paper confirmed the presence or absence of Dan Rice.

Nearly every week Wheeler wrote a report to the editor of the *White Cloud Globe* giving the news along the route. The last letter from Wheeler was acknowledged in the *Globe* on July 22: "W. S. Wheeler states that F. W. George and himself are conducting the Cherokee Medicine Co., W. S. Wheeler as manager and F. W. George as lecturer. The Jennier family are in St. Louis. De Vere, Ed Keetch and three of the band are with the Debonair circus. Pat McManus and two others have joined the Clark Bros. show. He pays his respects to certain persons connected with the World's Fair show but as THE GLOBE does not wish to provoke any controversy through its columns of so personal a nature, it will not print the whole letter. The White Cloud people with the show do not speak in very glowing terms of Mr. Wheeler either as a manager or as a man so what he might wish to say about them would have little force and contain little of interest."

By July 24 the show was back in White Cloud for "reorganization."

An advertisement July 29 in the *Globe* alerted the public to "Watch for the opening date of M. A. Taylor's World's Fair Combined Shows."

"This show is now being reorganized and made STRONGER THAN EVER, Both outside and inside features are new and attractive. DON'T MISS IT. Nothing like it will exhibit this year in this section. Among ITS RARE AMUSEMENT FEATURES. Troupes of Trained Horses, Troupes of Trained Ponies, Troupes of Trained Dogs, Jugglers, Tumblers, Acrobats, Vaulters, Leapers, Very Funny Clowns, The Modern Sampson, The Very Cleanest of Shows. REITER'S LADIES CORNET BAND. The show will be ready to re-open in WHITE CLOUD within ten or twelve days. WATCH FOR THE DATE."

The August 5 *Globe* fairly bubbled with circus news: "Jap Bennett takes Charley Seana's place at the Star Livery Stable." Seana joined the show as treasurer.

"The paper for the World's Fair Show is all here."



"You must see Prof. Ingham's famous troupe of trained horses Saturday August 6th.

"The World's Fair Shows have the best Leapers and Tumblers known in the profession.

"The World's Fair Shows have the finest Female Silver Cornet Band in the country.

"The departure of Bert Fowler and others with the show weakens the base ball club to such a degree that it may have to disband.

"Jesse Mills and Bert Fowler will control the advance for the re-organized World's Fair Show. The boys are rustlers and will work up a good business for the show.

"Four of the band boys of the White Cloud city band go with the show. Jesse Mills and Bert Fowler go in advance and Ralph Moore and Ralph Mauck go in the band."

Opening day on August 6, was far from satisfactory, as reported by the *Globe*: "Large crowds came to town to witness the show and give it a good send off at home.

"Unfortunately, only a few of the actors and inside features of the show reported for duty and the management was much disappointed at not being able to show to the large crowd of disappointed people who had assembled to see the show.

"The parade was a very creditable one for a small show.

"The free performance on the slack wire came off as advertised.

"The big show was opened and tickets were sold at 10 cents each and the performance of Prof. Ingram's trained horses and dogs, and the musical specialties of the Reiter girls were well worth all and more than the price of admission.

"It will be an honest show given by honest people and well worth honest patronage.

"No fakirs, sure thing men, or gambling devices of any kind will be allowed with the show."

Another column reported the following accident: "The slack wire walker with the World's Fair Show met with an accident that came very near proving fatal. As he was giving his outside exhibition Saturday night. Just as he started from his resting place on the wire it broke, and he fell about twenty feet, lighting on his neck and shoulders. His balancing pole, which was a long piece of three-quarter inch pipe fell on his head, knocking him insensible. He was immediately carried to the hotel on a stretcher and it was fully an hour before he recovered his senses. At first it was thought that he sustained serious internal injuries, and it is indeed surprising that he was not instantly killed. His injuries proved to be very

slight and he was around the next day and aside from being sore showed little evidence of his fall."

A new development concerning the first World's Fair show was also reported on the 12th: "Newt Lear sued Joe White Saturday for something over \$200 alleged to be due him on the old World's Fair Aggregation deal. Lear claimed that White sold him an undivided one-third interest in the show and represented that the

**Coming! Coming! Coming!**  
**The Great World's Fair Combine Show!**  
**DAN RICE'S Old Time Circus!**

→WILL EXHIBIT AT←  
**BUFFALO, KANS., JULY 4, 1892.**

<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>30 Star Performers!</b>	<b>4 FUNNY CLOWNS</b>
<b>DOG CIRCUS!</b>	More wonderful acts! More star Performers! More female acrobats! than all other shows combined.	The only one-ering show on the road this season.
Aftersoon and evening, doors open at 1 and 7 o'clock. Performance 1 hour later.	The greatest 25c show on earth.	Don't fail to see the old time circus Dan Rice.
One 25c ticket admits to all advertised shows.	Grand Free Exhibition will take place on the show lot at 12:30, noon, on the day of the Exhibition. It is grand and bewildering and keeps you spellbound with admiration, worth miles to come and see. Bring the children for it is free.	<b>Buffalo, July 4, Rain or Shine!</b>
The only Big Show that will be here this year.		
Reduced rates on all railroads.		

Dan Rice's name was used in this ad in the *Buffalo Advocate* on June 30, 1892. Kansas State Historical Society.

same was unencumbered, when at the-time of the sale the show outfit was all covered with a mortgage. Hence the suit to recover money under the warranty of the bill of sale. Lear failed to sustain his claim and a verdict was given favorable to White."

The last word on opening day was a statement made frequently in prohibition Kansas. "The usual crop of plain drunks were harvested Saturday."

The first road date, August 8, at Oregon, Missouri, was cancelled due to the failure of several performers to arrive in time. The first full performance was given at Mound City, Missouri, on August 9. Oscar Sikes and Chas. Anderson joined the performance at Mound City. After Ed Keetch and Sig Harris joined the program at Skidmore, Missouri on August 11, the price of admission was raised from ten cents to twenty-five. Several Missouri dates were apparently scheduled, but for an unknown reason they were cancelled and the show moved into Nebraska, the first stand being Rulo, August 22. Falls City, Nebraska, saw the show on August 30.

Taylor's World's Fair Combined Shows lost a matinee at Randolph, Kansas on September 6 because of high winds, but drew a fair audience in the evening.

The *Onaga Herald*, speaking of the exhibits of September 9, remarked with bitterness that: "It was a small affair as was to be expected, but of sufficient caliber to catch the fellow who never has money to pay for a newspaper or to meet his debts."

The *Muscotah Record* gave the show more support for the exhibitions of September 16, than any other paper on the known route. An improved, more attractive, advertisement appeared on the front page. On an inside page was a handout quoting the *Olsburg News-Letter* of June 9. The *Record* remarked that: "M. A. Taylor's 'stupendous assemblage of startling wonders' will be here Friday the 16th. It is advertised as the 'world's fair combined shows' with several outside 'consolidations.' It is the genuine old fashioned one ringed circus and the billboards are cover with it."

On circus day the *Record* was full of news: "Today is show day, but you will not have an opportunity to renew your acquaintances with the elephant." The show had no elephant.

"The show today is located in the pasture south of town to avoid paying city license. A show that mean should be boycotted.

"If the female band in town today dresses as it is advertised, all the men in town will have business on the street at the parade hour.

"The circus that shows here today is a Kansas production. It was organized and is owned by a White Cloud, Doniphan county, man and winters there. The managers do not claim to have a great show but say they have a good entertainment for 25 cents. One feature is that they allow no fakirs or gamblers on the grounds. There is no accompanying menagerie.

"The 'World's Fair Combined Shows' gave two performances in one tent at this place last Friday," according to the *Record* of September 23: "The show is a very small affair, but some of the acts were very good. In the matter of a band it is very short indeed, but the orchestra is a very fair one though it would do better in an opera house. The 'ladies band' was of course three-quarters men. A small crowd only was attracted. The show paid the regular city license of \$5, though the tents were not in the city limits. No fakirs were allowed."

"The World's Fair Show and Circus to be here Saturday [September 17] is the first in eight years," according to the *Effingham Graphic* which expected a stupendous crowd to witness "this highly interesting entertainment." The *Graphic* made no report following the performance.



The Huron Herald noted that: "Willie Briggs one of the advance men of the World's Fair Combined Shows is an expert card engraver."

Following the exhibitions of September 19, the Herald identified several of the performers: "Dot L. Harris who did the slack wire act with the World's Fair Combined Shows is a soubrette of considerable ability and has played with some good theatrical companies."

"The World's Fair Combined Shows came in on time and gave one of the best shows we have ever had the pleasure of witnessing. Every act was put in the ring with taste both in style and dress. Among the principal features was Prof. Ingrahm with his horses and dogs, Ed Keith [Keetch] in contortion and perch while Harry Devere the principal clown kept the crowd in good humor. Oscar Sikes in aerial work was also a good feature. The best of all, Prof. Reiter's Female Band. Miss Clara Reiter's baritone solos were simply great. Miss Ida Reiter's mandolin solos were a leading feature of the concert, Miss Nettie Reiter's cornet solos were pronounced by our musical citizens as 'out of sight.' The World's Fair Show can rest assured that at any future time they favor us with a visit they will be received with open arms."

The season of 1892 for M. A. Taylor came to an end in White Cloud on September 22, with exhibitions at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. The Globe reported the events of the last day: "The World's Fair Combined Shows gave two performances to a small crowd in the forenoon but a large one at night last Thursday."

"The show has been strengthened materially since opening the season and gave one of the best popular price performances ever given here."

"The main show is replete with acts that mark the performers as standing at the head of the profession."

"The concert is refined and pleasing and above average after performance usually given with shows of this kind."

"No gamblers of any kind, sure thing men, fakirs or camp followers are allowed with the show and the whole thing is an honest show making honest money."

"Not the least feature of the show was the music of Prof. Reiter's band and orchestra. Prof. Reiter and three of his daughters, Ralph Moore and Chas. Hoover comprise the orchestra. The Misses

Reiter took part in the concert in songs and dances, guitar mandolin and banjo specialties. Prof. Reiter is a star as a band organizer and instructor."

"Other features that merit notice were the tumbling, contortions and swinging perch of Ed Keetch, one of the best and hardest working men in the profession."

## COMING! COMING!

M. A. Taylor's  
World's Fair Combined Shows

WILL EXHIBIT AT

WHITE CLOUD

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6th.

This show has been reorganized and made

STRONGER THAN EVER.

With all new people and outside and inside attractions.

DON'T MISS IT.

Nothing like it will exhibit this year in this section. Among

Its Rare Amusement Features

Troupes of Trained Horses,  
Troupes of Trained Ponies,  
Troupes of Trained Dogs,  
Jugglers, Tumblers, Acrobats,  
Vaulters, Leapers,  
Very Funny Clowns,  
The Modern Sampson,  
The Very Cleanest of Shows.

THE GRAND STREET PARADE HEADED BY  
REITER'S LADIES CORNET BAND.

The greatest feature of the show  
is the performance of Prof. Clyde  
Ingram's magnificent

✦ Trained ✦ Horses. ✦

M. A. Taylor's name appeared in this ad for another 1892 stand in White Cloud, Kansas. Kansas State Historical Society.

The juggling, horizontal bar and all around work of Sig Harris; the trapeze of Anderson; the all around work of Harry Sykes; and last but not least the inimitable Harry Devere in his clowning and original ideas for provoking laughter and making fun. Other features were good but space forbids mention."

Directly below the foregoing story was a report of the sale of M. A. Taylor's World's Fair Combined Shows: "A change in the ownership and management of the World's Fair show took place Thursday. Messrs Keetch and Devere, leading man,

and business manager and clown respectively, being the purchasers."

"The new managers and proprietors will strengthen the show and make a tour of the southern states."

"A benefit performance was given Saturday night to a very good crowd and a most excellent performance was given. All of the old actors of the World's Fair show have engaged with the new management."

"The show left [September 29] for Oregon, Missouri, where the initial performance will be given. Success to the Messrs Keetch and Devere."

The benefit performance referred to was for the White Cloud town band and reaped \$17.

The name of the aggregation was now Devere & Keetch's Colossal Shows and Pyrotechnical Sensation.

"The novel feature of this show," according to the Globe, "will be a magnificent display of fireworks after every evening performance. The circus part of the show is strong and fully up to the average 50 cent show in point of merit."

Added to Prof. Reiter's band of three daughters were White Cloud citizens Ralph Moore, Jesse Mills, Ralph Mauck and Chas. Yeager.

Devere and Keetch opened their season in Oregon, following which the show disappeared into the wilds of Missouri.

The remaining mystery of the World's Fair shows is--who was M. A. Taylor?

Below is the known route of Joseph White's World's Fair Aggregation: May 21, White Cloud; May 23, Highland; May 24, Severance; May 25, Everest; May 27, Whiting; May 28, Wetmore; May 30, Goffs; May 31, Soldier; June 1, Havensville; June 2, Onaga; June 3, Wheaton; June 4, Westmoreland; June 6, Olsburg; June 7, Randolph; June 8, Leonardville; June 9, Riley; June 10, Wakefield; June 11, Industry; June 13, Manchester; June 16, Solomon; June 17, Enterprise; June 18, Hope; June 20, Herington; June 25, Cottonwood Falls; June 27, Strong City; July 2, Toronto; July 4, Buffalo; July 25, White Cloud (No show).

M. A. Taylor's World's Fair Combined Shows in 1892 played the following known dates: August 6, White Cloud\*; August 8, Oregon, Missouri (blown); August 9, Mound City, Missouri; August 11, Skidmore, Missouri; August 22, Rulo, Nebraska; August 30, Falls City, Nebraska; September 6, Randolph\*; September 7, Olsburg\*; September 10, Havensville\*; September 13, Goffs; September 14, Circleville; September 16, Muscotah; September 17, Effingham; September 19, Huron; September 22, White Cloud\*. \*Played by both shows.

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Topeka, Kansas.



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- 5). "CIRCUS SPECTACULAR" - LONDON
- 6). "MERLE & R/B BAND" - RCA 1931
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CARSON & BARNES:	1973, 1974, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1983 or '87
CIRCUS VARGAS:	1976, 1977 or 1978 (Canadian Tour)
HOXIE BROS. CIRCUS:	1975 or 1982
SELLS & GRAY CIRCUS:	1972 or 1974
MILLER-JOHNSON:	1972
CIRCUS GENOA:	1979
HAMID-MORTON CIRCUS:	1976
INAT'L ALL STAR CIRCUS:	1977
GEORGE MATTHEWS:	1974
KING BROS-CRISTIANI:	1953
CLYDE BEATTY CIRCUS:	1957
CIRCUS TIVOLI:	1982 (Canada)
CIRCO ATAYDE:	1972 (Mexico)
BILLY SMART CIRCUS:	1969 (England)
MOSCOW CIRCUS:	1963 (1st US Tour)
CIRQUE VEGAS:	1982 (Canada)
CIRCUS KNIE:	1980 (Switzerland)

### SPECIAL SINGLE TAPES

#### SINGLE TAPES - \$8.50 + SHIPPING

"A NOSTALGIC TRIO" - Floyd King, Joe McKennon and Hubert Castle give personal remembrances of their decades in show biz!

"MUSIC FROM G.S.O.E." - all the fun and excitement of DeMille's spectacular circus story captured in the music that we all remember!

"BARNUM - THE MUSICAL" - the original broadway cast creates true magic in this delightful musical based on the remarkable life of P.T. BARNUM.

"1943 FITCH BANDWAGON" - Merle Evans and the RB band are featured with Fred Bradna & Bev Kelley on this radio broadcast. Plus interviews with RB performers: Unus, Francis Brunn and other surprises!

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Live Chicago concert with band made up of some of the finest circus bandsmen in the country. Contains numbers not usually recorded but that were favorites of Merle's. Lively & fun concert!

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Authentic music recorded on the midway of the mighty Royal American Carnival in 1961.

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# CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY

Every so often, story books are written that tell of someone who has lived an interesting and adventurous life, and there are times that some local person may come along who has experienced such an adventure in his life's journey. Of local interest is the story of Adam Bardy, who began his "adventure" in 1915, at the age of eight, running away with the great Buffalo Bill Wild West Circus, when the Circus was playing in his home town of Webster, Mass.

This beginning adventure was of very short duration, as Adam met up with gypsy fortune tellers the very next day, and, in their generosity, they gave Adam trolley car fare money, and Adam returned home.

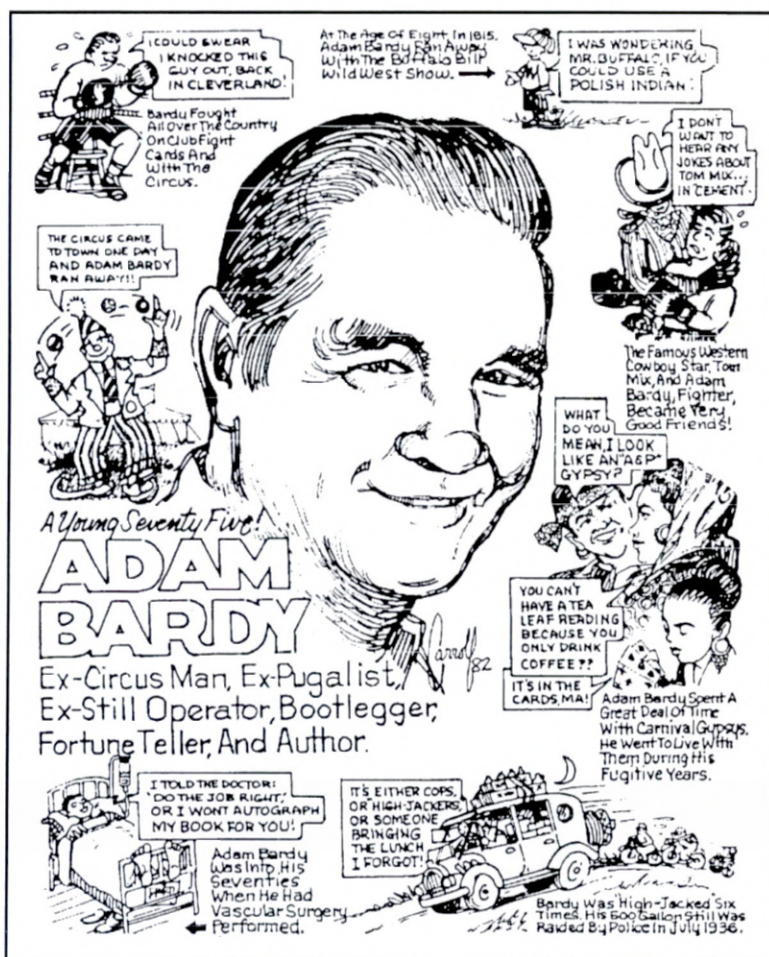
In Adam's teenage years, he lived with woodchoppers in shanties in the woods, and finally in a deserted farmhouse. At the age of seventeen, Adam joined the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus. Other large and small circuses were to be Adam's life, until, in 1929, Adam met up with Kentucky Mountaineers, and the life of a bootlegger was to begin. A thrilling adventure as a big-time bootlegger was Adam's lot in life, until the Conn. State Police wiped out the operation. Adam escaped from custody, and a fugitive's existence lasting seven long years began. During this time, Adam learned all about fortune telling, a life he followed for many years. After that seven years, Adam gave up and turned himself in to the police. He went on to raising beautiful meat and show rabbits, and became New England's largest rabbit breeder. Then he went back to doing character readings, using palm readings and handwriting analysis by mail.

But, of all Adam's adventures, his memories of circus life were the best, including the opportunity to have had personal mends like the great Tom Mix, who joined the Sells-Floto Circus when Adam was with that circus in 1929, and Adam's interest in boxing, which his good friend Tom Mix really loved.

And now, as Adam lives his quiet life out in the country, he has written an interesting book that tells of his forty-seven years with his wonderful late wife, Ann, who was a devoted and loving mate. The story tells of what it was like to live with a fugitive and bootlegger husband all those years, and then of her passing in 1980. Adam recounts his loneliness for three years. Adam continues his story by telling how the palmistry reading of a young twenty-one year old girl blossomed into a wonderful friendship of true love and romance, as it can come to one who has lived an adventurous, interesting life. The story explains how, through deep faith in God, Adam could live this strange, unusual and interesting life, so full of excitement, and still remain the happy-go-lucky person he still is. Adam credits all this to the guiding hand of God.

The interesting life story of Adam includes that of his close companion, twenty-two year-old Terry Lyn Bates. Her story alone is well worth the price of the book, as one can see that age alone is not what counts, but the way we live our lives.

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of *Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*, send check or money order for \$12.95 to:



**ADAM BARDY**

87 Alm Rd.  
Thompson, CT 06277